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3 Reading

MEANS AND METHODS
IN THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF THE YOUNG

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

BY

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PREFACE

At a time when special attention is being given to the question of educational reform, this book, it is hoped, may add a moiety to the efforts of all those writers and practical workers who are concerning themselves more particularly with the religious and moral aspect of education.

The book strives to represent, more especially in the interest of Sunday School workers, the reasoned conclusions and suggestions of one who has had a long and varied experience both as a teacher and a trainer of teachers; and whilst it lays stress on the value of educational theory, it tries to show how this theory can be translated into actual teaching practice.

In the course of writing the book the author has been mostly under the guidance of two ideas, sufficiently well recognised by educational thinkers, but too frequently ignored in the practical work of religious instruction. The first is, that the religious teacher of to-day must base his teaching on a conception of religion at once broader and deeper—and, it might be added, more educatively interesting—than any conception definable in the set terms of a Church creed. The times are ripe for such a conception. The conception is, indeed, already abundantly operative in many of our social and national activities; and it is the duty and privilege of preacher and teacher to foster the development of such a conception and to emphasise its value and limitless applications. The second idea is, that the methods of religious instruction must be such as to ensure that the pupils' religious knowledge shall be translated, not to the dead page of an examination paper, but into the living page of a

religious and moral life. The mere prescribing and hearing of Bible lessons, and the "getting up" of Biblical matter for examination purposes, are, in the writer's view, incompatible with a real and effective religious education, whose outcome should be not so much an intellectual state of mind as a spiritual state of soul ever ready to express itself in a corresponding practical morality.

Amongst the various branches of religious instruction dealt with the writer has ventured, in Chapter V, to include the question of teaching the "miraculous" elements in the Bible. The question, like that of the training of the Sunday School teacher discussed in Chapter I, is largely one for the Churches to settle. All that the writer has attempted is to suggest to the practical teacher a possible line of presentation of the "miraculous" suitable for the older pupils of our schools.

Whilst due acknowledgment has been made throughout the book of the various authors to whom the writer has been specifically indebted, special acknowledgment is here due to Messrs. Longmans' theological adviser for his valued suggestions when the book was in manuscript, and for his very helpful guidance in the writing of Chapter XII.

The writer's thanks are also due to the following publishers for permission to quote from their publications: Messrs. Sidgwick and Jackson (the sonnet "Peace" in *1914 and Other Poems*, by Rupert Brooke); Mr. John Murray (stanzas from *Ballads of Battle*, by Lance-Corporal Joseph Lee); and Mr. Arthur Mee (a complete story from *The Little Paper*).

Wherever throughout the book the teacher or pupil has had to be designated by a pronoun, the conventional masculine pronoun has been used.

J. D.

TRAINING COLLEGE, DUNDEE, *June*, 1917.

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MEANS AND METHODS IN THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF THE YOUNG

CHAPTER I

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND THE CHURCH

FACTS, brute horrid facts, are compelling us to rethink and to emphasise afresh the aims and practices of a true human culture. If we assume, as we do assume, that a true and stable civilisation must be founded on the bedrock principles of true religion, and if our hopes for the speedy coming of a reconstructed and better civilisation are to be centred in the rising generation, then there should be no more pertinent and pressing questions for the teacher, even in the midst of catastrophic war, than these two—"What is religion?" and "How shall we teach it to our children?" The questions have been asked and answered before; they need to be asked and answered anew. For man, even with the revelation of Jesus Christ before his eyes, is constantly losing sight of the highest end of his being through his absorption in the means or the machinery for reaching that end. It is the same in all our human activities. "Faith in machinery," says Matthew Arnold, "is our besetting danger; often in machinery most absurdly disproportioned to the end which this

machinery, if it is to do any good at all, is to serve ; but always in machinery, as if it had a value in and for itself."[1]

How true this has been of the educational machinery of our schools and our Churches ! How prone we are to estimate our progress in direct proportion to the multiplication of the machinery of buildings and equipment, preachers and teachers, sermons and ceremonials, syllabuses and schemes of instruction, examinations and numerical results. Yet it may be truly said that never was there so much religion of the right type amongst us as in these times of national stress ; and when the Great Occasion that has evoked this religion has passed away, may the type not be forgotten.

What then *is* religion ? Or rather, what are some of the characteristics of religion which the teacher needs to keep constantly in view in the religious education of the child ? There are three at least. *First* and above all, religion is a mode of life, not so much a body of religious knowledge. *Second*, the religious life is inseparably bound up with the individual's whole life, and is not a thing apart. *Third*, religious ideas and modes of thinking and feeling are progressive both in the race and in the individual.

First, that religion is a mode of life the teacher must keep for ever goading himself into remembering ; he cannot altogether be blamed if he does forget it under the pressure of lower aims set before him. What mode of life ? That of Jesus Christ. It is the highest example of the highest life we can conceive, and constitutes the most concrete, pointed, and practically helpful definition we have of an ideal religion. Christ's knowledge and teachings about God and the Kingdom

[1] *Culture and Anarchy*, chap. i.

of God was not His religion: it only explained His religion. Whilst His knowledge of the law of God and His mode of daily life corresponded, it was the latter that constituted His religion. He himself emphasised this when to the lawyer who *knew* the law of a truly religious life He said, "*Do* this and thou shalt live." The gap between religious knowledge and religious life is never a small one, and the only proof that the machinery of religious instruction is producing the right kind of result is to be found, not in a child's examination paper, but in his mental attitude and daily conduct towards God and man. Just how to instruct so that religious *instruction* shall issue in religious *life* is the capital problem of the religious teacher. It is the problem of religious education or the development of religious life, as contrasted with the much simpler problem of instruction in religious knowledge; and it should therefore be the aim of the religious teacher not only to impart religious knowledge, but to suggest and organise and direct such religious and moral activities as can be carried out by his pupils. Professor MacCunn says, "One may doubt if it is more than a subordinate part of a religious body's work to find a sphere of action for its members," and that "its main task is rather to create the spirit in which the work of the world, sometimes called secular, ought to be done."[1] Yet the creation of such a spirit can be considerably fostered by a Church that both suggests and finds spheres of action for its members.

Second, the religious life is or ought to be inseparably bound up with the individual's life as a whole. As religion is a mode of living in accordance with what we know of the character and purposes of God, and as this knowledge is being gradually revealed to us through

[1] *The Making of Character*, p. 111.

the progress of human thought and life, it follows that religious thought and life cannot be separated from so-called secular thought and life. From this in turn follows the important practical corollary that the religious education of a child cannot be separated from his education as a whole. This is a point that has been forgotten or ignored in much of our Sunday-school Bible instruction. Whilst the contents of the Bible are, to quote Ruskin's judgment, matchless in literature,[1] they have been too often treated as absolutely unique literature—the work of God-inspired and at the same time infallible writers. The result of thus identifying inspiration and infallibility has been to teach the Bible literature as something remote from modern practical interests and without relationship to man's spiritual development in such spheres as science, art, and music. But the ordinary day school instruction brings the child within the influence of this development, and he is the true religious teacher who enlists the services of any form of human culture that can contribute towards the growth of religious thought and feeling amongst his pupils.

3 The third characteristic—that religious ideas and ways of thinking are progressive both in the race and in the individual—is expressed by one Church writer as follows: "Human culture is a developing whole, and religion as an element in that whole must develop in order to live."[2] For the teacher the most important part of the statement is "religion must develop in order to live." The religious ideas and practices of the twentieth century are different in some respects from even those of the nineteenth century, and mere

[1] *Our Fathers have told us*, chap. iii.

[2] *The Philosophy of Religion*, by the Very Rev. Principal Galloway, p. 179.

lip-homage to any detailed form of creed no longer believed in spells death to the religious *life*. That a religious creed is not a fixed unalterable code of beliefs for all time is proved by the Bible itself. Thus throughout the Bible there can be traced a gradual progress on the part of the Hebrew race from the crude idea of a tribal God who was more to be feared than loved, to the sublime idea as revealed in Jesus Christ of a Universal Spirit who is at once the All-Mighty and the All-Father. And even Christianity itself, as one writer has pointed out, is not a finished product. It is a life of tendency and aspiration. That a religious "creed"—like any other human form of belief—serves its day and generation and no longer, is an historical fact, the ignoring of which may prove disastrous in the religious education of the young.

Even from this brief consideration of what is implied in the term "religion" it is evident that the work of religious training of the young is far from easy, and that it demands the best energies of men and women whose hearts are consecrated to the work, whose minds are full of the wisdom that comes from wide views and a tolerant spirit, and who have some expert knowledge of how to teach. Hitherto this work of religious training has been regarded by the Churches as peculiarly their own. They have carried it on indirectly through their partial control of religious instruction in the day schools, and directly through their own Sunday schools, Bible classes, and similar agencies. Originally the Sunday school gave instruction in secular as well as in religious subjects; after the establishment of the day-school system the Sunday school dropped the secular subjects from its curriculum. The continued maintenance and development of the Sunday school by the Churches must therefore imply

that, in view of the Churches, the religious instruction given in the day school is not sufficient for the proper religious training of the young. Hence the function of the Sunday school must be to foster the religious development of the child in a way and to a degree that cannot be done—or that is not done—in the day school. It must answer to this demand, otherwise there seems little or no justification for its continued existence. Even if the Sunday school be called the child's church, the name does not necessarily justify its separate existence, unless the instruction in such a church is carried on in a more emphatically religious manner than in the day school and with at least equal teaching skill.

The broad, general requirements for the carrying out by the Churches of such a distinctly religious function may be conveniently considered under two heads—The Teacher and the Material of Instruction.

For the most part the Church has entrusted its Sunday school work to untrained teachers. Now the Church is or ought to be an organic whole, and the Sunday school should be regarded as the foundation of the congregation. It would seem, therefore, that the Church should exercise as much care in training its Sunday school teachers as in training its preachers. That it has long been content to entrust the most delicate and difficult part of its work to the untrained teacher has been due, in many quarters at least, to the influence of two baneful fallacies. One fallacy that for long held sway is that the Bible is a " plain straightforward story " of God's revelation, made intelligible to the meanest capacity through the mysterious operation of God's Holy Spirit. As this fallacy principally concerns the Biblical material of instruction we shall refer to it later on.

The other fallacy is that successful teaching depends more on the personality of the teacher than on any exact knowledge of how to teach. Now it should be frankly stated that this word "personality" has been too often used in the sphere of education to cloak over ignorance and inefficiency. Let us grant that the first requisite of the religious educator is personal consecration to the service of God and all that that implies. For children, whose early activities are largely imitative, the living example of such a personality means very much. But in itself it is not enough. Mere imitation of goodness is not goodness, it is servitude; the consciousness of the truth or ground of the goodness makes men free; and the presentation of the truth to children demands knowledge of how the child mind learns and skill in teaching in accordance with that knowledge. Even Jesus did not rely upon His personality to win men. Whilst He lived the new gospel of love before the eyes of men, He also tried to explain it by such methods as would commend it to their understandings. He was a great teacher as well as a great personality; and He was a great personality because He was a great teacher. It is true that in the history of educational activity there have been a few rare personalities who, "by the grace of God," were born teachers; but even they had to grow in the knowledge of how to teach by long and patient study of the child-mind. The fact that Jesus found so much difficulty in explaining His Gospel to the willing part of His audience is significant of the intellectual and other difficulties involved in the religious education of the young. Hence, psychology, or the scientific investigation of the laws of mental, moral, and religious development, has a just claim on the attention of the Sunday school teacher.

In the matter of training its teachers the Church is to a certain extent acting up to its responsibility, as is evidenced in the activities of the various Sunday school associations both at home and abroad. Some of these associations have established special schools for the purpose of giving a formal and continuous course of training similar to that required of the day school teachers. But the vast majority of Sunday school teachers have neither the time nor the means to go through such a course. To suit their case other means of training have been employed, such as the holding of summer schools, in which for a short period they may receive expert instruction and practice in teaching. But even these short courses of training only influence a small fraction of the great army of Sunday school teachers. What is wanted, therefore, is a course of training easily within the reach of all teachers. The Churches in a community might well share amongst them the work of training. If it is too much to expect that the various denominations should co-operate in this work, then at least each denomination might be responsible for training its own teachers in the community. Further, whilst each denomination should take general charge of the training of its own teachers, each individual Church might carry out the actual work and details of training. Each individual Church then would require the services of a head teacher or trainer, that is, one who had himself received some training in the theory and practice of teaching, and who at the same time was well fitted by theological scholarship and personal qualifications and prestige to inspire and guide the student-teachers. The individual who should best meet these requirements is the minister or clergyman of the particular Church. This of course would imply that every candidate for the ministry

should have some training in teaching as well as in preaching. If some knowledge of child psychology and the principles of teaching is to be required of the Sunday school teacher, it should be required of the future minister. Such a knowledge might be easily acquired as part of his course of professional training, whilst at the same time he might be gaining some practical experience in the Sunday school itself in actual class management and teaching. The problem of class management and discipline in the Sunday school is in too many cases a troublesome one, and such an addition to the training of the minister as we have suggested might help very much to solve the problem. There is an additional and, as it seems to us, a very strong reason why the minister should be directly responsible for the training and guidance of his Sunday school teachers. By his course of training for the ministry he is the one best fitted to help them in dealing with those difficulties of interpretation which modern study of the Bible has raised and which, when slurred over, tend to affect the sincerity of many a Bible instructor.

The training of the teachers should be given in weekly preparation classes, in the Bible class, and in the Sunday school itself. Lectures and books on methods are not enough. These do not resolve the teacher's difficulties in the way that can be done in a class where there is free question, answer, and discussion under a competent guide. A Preparation Class is also the best place for explaining to the teachers the principles and sequence and any particular points of the syllabus of religious instruction which they are expected to teach from Sunday to Sunday. As for the Bible class, it should be one of the most suitable fields for the recruiting and partial training of the Sunday school

teacher. Its pupils are at an age when they are beginning to read and think for themselves, and when their reading may be opening up to them new lines of religious thought that do not seem to run parallel with their earlier beliefs. The wisest guidance is wanted here, to prevent the simple reverence and faith of childhood disappearing in the mists of scepticism and to enable it to grow into a more rational and a fuller faith. And this is the very kind of guidance that should be helpful to those in the class who are to take up Sunday school work.

The maintenance of some such systematic and continuous training of the teacher as we have indicated might well be expected to have this result, that the child would grow up into manhood with a more intelligent and a more sincere appreciation of the message of the pulpit. Unless the Churches are prepared to carry on the work of religious education in the same intelligent and systematic way in which the State seeks to carry on the work of secular education, then that work might well be left to the day school. The day school teacher receives, during his training college course, a systematic course of instruction in the matter and method of religious teaching; and if in his own class teaching he were accorded more freedom from ecclesiastical control and inspection and a greater liberty in choosing and interpreting his religious material, the cause of true religious culture would, in the writer's opinion, gain immensely. The day schools do not so much object to teach religion as to teach it according to some hard and fast rule and order; indeed, the most effective religious training is often given in those schools by teachers whose whole day's work is permeated with the religious spirit.

Bible Teaching

CHAPTER II

THE MATERIAL OF RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

THE Bible, whilst not the only source of religious instruction material, is admittedly the highest and most limitless source from which we can draw. It is not so much a book as a whole literature of religion. In using this literature as a means of religious education the teacher has to deal with three main problems—those of arrangement of material to suit the child, selection, and interpretation. First, as to *arrangement.* If the order of the Books of the Bible corresponded to the order of the development of the child's religious ideas, we ought to follow this order in our teaching. But the order does not even correspond to the development of the religious ideas of the race. The first chapter of Genesis introduces the conception of God as the creative spirit of the universe—a conception far removed from the anthropomorphic idea of God which the patriarchs held. It is also far removed from the idea of a plurality of gods with which the Israelites were familiar and which many of them believed. The injunction "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me," implied the existence of such a belief. Then, again, the Mosaic code of conduct was formulated and enjoined on the nation, not before the preaching of the prophets, but after and largely as the outcome of this preaching. Hence, even if we were wholly to accept the theory that the development of the child follows that of the race, we should be compelled to re-arrange our Bible material. But indeed individual

development does not simply recapitulate race development. In the case of the individual there is what is called a race inheritance which enables him first, to take "short cuts" from one stage of development to another, and second to pass beyond the stage previously reached by the race. The child of modern civilisation does not think or at least does not speak of a plurality of gods; his education and environment make him familiar with the idea of one God, and he speaks and acts in accordance with that notion. Yet —and this is a most significant fact for the religious educator—the child's mental picture of the one God is at first very like that held by the race in its infancy. "How did God get up into the sky?" asked a boy of five of his elder brother aged seven. The reply "Jumped up, of course," was a serious explanation such as might have been given by primitive man who could only think of and picture God as some great superman. Like the conceptions of the race, the child's ideas of the nature and character of the one God gradually develop from a crude anthropomorphic or man-like representation of God to a more and more spiritual conception. Because of this human way in which the child first thinks of God, some of the narratives in Genesis and following books in which God is represented as appearing and speaking to men are quite appropriate material to begin with. The very same reason, however, justifies us in introducing him at the same time to the New Testament narratives about God as represented in the person and life of Jesus Christ. The fact that Christ's message in all its fulness is beyond the comprehension of a child is no argument—as some would hold it to be—against teaching a child the New Testament; for the personality and life of Jesus are replete with the humanity that speaks

to the understanding and heart of a child. As one writer says, "The finest art of religious teachers might with great advantage be concentrated on the sole task of making the young realise the personality round which the New Testament is built up."[1] This early introduction to the New Testament has this further justification. Whilst the narratives about the patriarchs are excellent material for teaching the child elementary ideas of justice, they fail to emphasise the conception of God as a God of love. Yet it is through the conception of love rather than of justice that a child's religious instincts are first developed. The Gospel narratives about Jesus supply the omission in the way that appeals to the child.

The question as to the *selection* of Biblical material is so far simplified for the Sunday school teacher if we agree that the special and supreme aim of the Sunday school is the development of the religious side of the child's life. Now the Bible contains a great deal of matter that cannot be regarded as religious knowledge. Lists of kings, accounts of tribal wars, the lengthy details of Solomon's temples, are examples. The merely informative part of a Bible lesson is to be taught in the Sunday school only in so far as it helps to explain some religious truth and to impress it on the imagination and memory of the child. If a Sunday school syllabus contains a lesson in which no religious truth is involved, then the Sunday school is scarcely the place for such a lesson. The undue attention that is often paid to purely geographical and historical matter, such as the wanderings of the Israelites or the itineraries of St. Paul, tend to overshadow the real aim of the Sunday school. This attention to purely secular and relatively unimportant matter is unfortunately

[1] *How to Teach the Bible*, by the Rev. A. F. Mitchell, M.A.

too often prompted by the demands of Bible competitive examinations, and by the natural desire of the teachers that their pupils should acquit themselves well in the examinations.

The tendency to overdo the study of secular matter is more pronounced in senior or Bible classes, the idea being that the older pupils should be studying the Bible in more detail. But this detailed study might well be concentrated on the religious and moral questions presented in the Bible or suggested by it. True morality of the individual and of the State cannot be separated from religion, and Bible class pupils are of an age when they should be led to a consideration of such questions as the rights and duties of citizenship which find their highest sanction and support in the religion of the New Testament. Such a saying as "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's, and unto God the things which be God's," should open up a field of discussion more spiritually profitable than any learned disquisition on the Roman coinage that may be suggested by Christ's request, "Shew me a penny."

Outside the purely informative matter of the Bible, then, how shall we proceed in our selection? Different teachers may draw up different syllabuses of instruction; but every syllabus should contain material that answers two conditions.[1] First, it should be such as will develop right conceptions of God and a resulting reverential and worshipful attitude towards Him. Second, it should develop right ideas of conduct. Very frequently the subject matter of a Bible lesson may do both; sometimes only one or the other condition may be satisfied; but the syllabus as a whole should satisfy both conditions. Of course in the

[1] See *How to Teach the Bible*—a book to whose stimulating guidance the present writer owes much in the writing of this chapter.

selection of particular passages under either division the age and intelligence of the class have to be considered; hence the syllabus for a junior class will differ in detail from that of a senior class. The lack of this grading principle in some Sunday school syllabuses of instruction is often a serious hindrance both to successful instruction and to successful discipline.

For the development of right ideas of God and a corresponding religious attitude of mind, the Bible furnishes us with two kinds of passages. There are, first, those passages which deal with nature and in which the writers represent God as supreme in nature; and second, those in which the writers represent God as communing directly with men, and manifesting a direct active interest in human affairs. Through the Nature passages the child can be introduced to the Hebraic belief that God manifested His strength and majesty in the awe-inspiring phenomena of Nature. This belief is not unnatural to a child—for him as for the old Jew the world of nature is not a world of the dead but of the living—and if the belief can be made to inspire the child with reverence for the Creator of all things, it should not be prematurely and ruthlessly dispelled by any attempt at scientific explanation. The pagan belief—readily accepted even yet by many a child—that thunder is the voice of God is a first step, and in a sense the last step, in the development of that spiritual conception of nature which is certainly aided by science, but which at the same time soars above and beyond it. The time will come in the child's life when the spiritual aspect of nature will be in danger of obliteration by the prominence given to the material. Carlyle, writing of pagan mythology, says, "What we now lecture of as science they wondered at and fell down in awe before as religion."[1] Words of deep

[1] *Heroes and Hero-worship*, Lecture I: "The Hero as Divinity."

educational import! In all our school science curricula, from the simplest nature knowledge upwards to the more rigid investigation of physical and chemical laws, there is a spiritual danger, owing to examination and other demands, of both teacher and pupils becoming so absorbed in apparatus and experiments that the earth which "is the Lord's and the fulness thereof," resolves itself into a thing to be weighed and measured. Whilst it is outside the strict province of science teaching to concern itself with the spiritual aspect of nature, it is all the more necessary that this aspect should be emphasised in religious education.[1] The material for this purpose is to be found in the poetry of the Old Testament—in many of the Psalms for example—as well as in the best spiritual poetry of our own poets. Great poetry has a truth of its own, and, in Professor A. C. Bradley's words, may be nearer the ultimate truth than scientific statements which in their own sphere must be taken as final. Thus we no longer accept the first chapter of Genesis as a scientific explanation of the origin of the world. We accept it as the simple yet sublime expression of some inspired poetic soul as he contemplated with reverential awe the God-created world he saw around him. It is a great hymn descriptive of the fact of creation as that fact appeared to the writer's inner feeling and intuition rather than to his reasoning; and the child who in Wordsworth's language "comes in clouds of trailing glory from God who is his home," more readily accepts the simple truth of the poet than the laboured truth of the scientist. Yet through wise instruction in science, the infantile wonder and reverence of the child should grow into the wonder that springs from knowledge and which begets a more intelligent rever-

[1] See Professor Laurie's *Institutes of Education*, pp. 416, 417.

ence and adoration. "'What!' it will be questioned, 'when the sun rises, do you not see a disc of fire, somewhat like a guinea?' 'Oh, no, no! I see an innumerable company of the heavenly host crying, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty.'"[1] That is the spiritual attitude—call it mysticism if you like—that we should seek to develop alongside the child's progressing insight into nature's ways. It is the reverential attitude in which the mind of man finds the wisdom, the might, the love, and the righteous anger of God behind the phenomena of the scientist. The development of such a reverential attitude amongst our children is one sure means of ultimately inspiring them to reverence all noble ideals and to strive to realise them in their own conduct.

The child's conceptions of God are also to be developed by those numerous passages in which God is represented as communing with men. Such passages would include the stories of the patriarchs, the call to Moses, the visions of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Samuel, and Elijah, in the Old Testament; and in the New Testament the visions of Mary, Zacharias, of Jesus at His baptism, temptation, and transfiguration, of Saul on his way to Damascus, and of Peter at Joppa. At first the child, like the infant race, tends to regard God as simply a great superman. It is the part of the religious teacher to lead the child gradually towards a more exalted and more spiritual view, to show him that God reveals Himself not to the physical and outer eye of man but to the inner eye of imagination and thought.

The second main division of religious instruction material is more directly concerned with conduct. For the development of right and definite conceptions

[1] Extract from a letter written by the mystic poet-painter William Blake to a correspondent. See W. M. Rossetti's edition of the poet's works, p. cvi.

of conduct the Bible provides ample material to the teacher. Here again, however, the Bible is not "a plain straightforward story." For the purpose of teaching children there must be re-arrangement, selection, modification, and interpretation. The ideals of conduct set forth in the Old Testament are far inferior to those set forth in the teachings of Jesus and exemplified in His own life. The very passages in the Old Testament which are most suitable for developing reverential ideas of God in the minds of children, tend at the same time to over-emphasise the idea of God as a God of Justice who treats His subjects in a strictly judiciary fashion uninfluenced by considerations of love and mercy. A slight acquaintance with children is sufficient to prove that the idea of justice embodied in the dictum, "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," needs little or no emphasising. Yet, whilst the ideals of Jesus are far from being realised in modern life, the child of to-day is more or less familiar with those ideals. His reading, and sometimes even his own personal experience, introduces him to individuals who have on occasion acted in accordance with those ideals, and he is, therefore, in some measure able to criticise the lower ideals of conduct illustrated in some of the Old Testament narratives. In the case of young children therefore who do not understand the progressive nature of moral ideals, we should take care to introduce them only to such Old Testament narratives as do not conflict with their moral sense of right and wrong as developed by their present environment. Or, if they read narratives that do conflict with this sense, they should be guided in criticising and contrasting the ideals set forth with the higher ideals of the New Testament. For the purpose of emphasising these higher ideals the religious teacher should draw

upon the stories of non-Biblical literature—both prose and verse—in which these ideals are described and exemplified in action. The daily and periodical press too of modern days is full of accounts of living examples of the generous, the brave, the self-sacrificing deed, and might well be used in our Sunday schools to stimulate the imagination and win the affections of our pupils for Christ-like ideals of conduct. What texts and object lessons, for example, are ready to the hand of the teacher in such deathless tales as those of the martyred Nurse Cavell, the faithful-unto-death Jack Cornwell, and many others. The more frequently we can present living present-day examples of the Christ life, the more surely may we hope that in time our pupils will translate the ideals in some measure into their own living practice.

A word or two as to the problem of *interpretation* which will be further treated in Chapter V. Whilst most teachers would be quite prepared to lead their pupils towards a spiritual interpretation of the Old Testament records of God's direct intervention in nature and in man's affairs, they feel they are confronted with a real difficulty when they come to deal with the New Testament miracles, and particularly those of the Incarnation and Resurrection of our Lord. Some years ago the Archbishop of Canterbury made an inquiry into the state of religious instruction in English schools. To his inquiries one prominent teacher replied, " How could intelligent and educated men be expected to teach the myths of religion, such as the resurrection and ascension of our Lord ? " What the teacher probably meant was that he could not honestly teach the doctrines of the creed in all their literalness. The most thoughtful and at the same time the most reverent Bible critics understand and sym-

pathise with such an attitude of mind. But whilst the old belief in the literal meaning of the doctrines of the Incarnation and Resurrection is wavering, the ordinary man has difficulty in putting anything in their place. The Sunday school teacher in particular needs guidance. In too many cases the difficulty is resolved by an absolute rejection and even abuse of the Creed. Yet, as one Church authority pointed out, "the history of the Church brought out the fact that there was divine power in tradition, in the transmitted reverence and collective piety of the past, which no abuse should be allowed to obscure from our self-confident modern eyes. When men said they had lost patience with the past, we were not disposed to put much faith in their hopes for the future. No gain in the restatement of the Church doctrine or in the readjustment of the Church's organism proved to be worth the loss incurred by a wanton break with what was vital in the traditions of the faith."[1] Thus, to take one doctrine of the Christian creed, whether a teacher believes in the physical resurrection of Jesus or not, the idea of resurrection is fundamental and vital in the Christian faith. We may reject the old form in which a past age clothed the idea, but the idea itself as the highest source of moral energy and religious hope must be preserved. Believing in the idea men have gladly suffered and to-day are suffering unto death for righteousness' sake. To guide the rising generation into an intelligent appreciation of what is transitory, and what is vital and eternal in our Christian faith, is peculiarly the duty and the privilege of a Christian Church and a ministry of trained preachers and teachers.

[1] The Rev. Professor Moffat, in an address at the re-opening of the Glasgow U.F.C. College, 13th October, 1915.

CHAPTER III

THE GENERAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE AND ACTION

In modern textbooks on teaching, lessons are divided into certain types according to the special purpose of the lesson. Thus the main purpose of some lessons is to impart knowledge that will widen the child's view of the world ; of other lessons to develop his power in using his hands aright (manual instruction) ; of others to cultivate his æsthetic taste, and so on. In accordance with what we have already urged as the supreme aim of religious education we shall now consider that type of lesson whose purpose is to influence the religious and moral life of the child.

If we think of all religious truth as meant for action and not for mere contemplation, then the twofold division of instruction material given in Chapter II may be regarded as one. The revelation of God in nature or His more direct revelation to man as in Jesus, is as much intended to influence our general conduct as direct precepts. Sometimes alongside the revelation we find definite lines of conduct enjoined ; at other times we have to draw our own inferences as to the right attitude of mind and the right action to adopt. But whether the religious truths of the Bible directly enjoin on us certain conduct or not, they are meant to be closely bound up with *action*, including, as an important part of man's action, the action of worship.

Now, in teaching religious truths which are meant to

influence conduct the teacher's aim must be to secure not only the intellectual assent but the practical assent of his pupils to the truths. That is, the instruction must be such as will, *first*, convince the pupils that the truths are applicable to all people including themselves, and, *second*, impel the pupils to act in harmony with the truths. As regards many of the truths of science which bear on our daily activities we not only give our intellectual assent to them, but because they affect our material interests we more readily give them our practical assent—that is, we more readily regulate our actions by them. The scientific truth that water in freezing expands, leads the intelligent housewife in a time of hard frost to adopt such measures as will prevent the water freezing in the housepipes. The consequence of neglect—burst pipes and flooding—is here so obvious that the scientific truth needs little impressing. But in the sphere of spiritual truths both the intellectual and the practical assent are much weaker. The consequences of neglecting them are as a rule neither so immediate nor so obvious. The spiritual truth embodied in Christ's saying, "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon" may be, and often is, violated without entailing any material loss. How seldom does the truth receive our whole-hearted intellectual assent, let alone our practical assent! And when it comes to such sublime precepts as "Love your enemies," it is almost impossible to give even an intellectual assent. It is this difference between truths affecting our material interests and truths affecting our spiritual interests that makes the work of religious and moral education so difficult. In teaching a spiritual truth intended to influence a pupil's conduct the teacher may have frequently to appeal to the pupil's material interests, *but only as a means towards the end.*

The ultimate appeal must be made somehow or other to the pupil's spiritual interests.

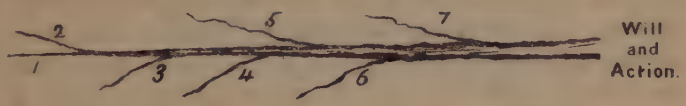
In the effort to secure the pupil's intellectual assent to or belief in a particular religious truth, mere pointing out of the truth as it is found in some story or narrative, psalm, prophecy, or parable is not enough. Nor is the mere memorising of religious truths, as in Bible texts, of any value as a means of influencing the pupil's religious life. The spiritual truth " The wages of sin is death " is just so many words to young children, and however often repeated and memorised its meaning cannot possibly be understood and believed in till the child has had much experience of life and can reflect upon that experience. Part of the meaning, viz. the material and visible consequences of sin, can be illustrated through the story of some sinful action and its visible material consequences to the sinner. But even as regards this the material side of the truth, instance after instance of its application must be presented to the child before he can be expected to be convinced of the truth. Again take the precept " Love your neighbour as yourself." The child cannot be expected to believe in the universal application of the precept until he sees or hears of numerous instances where people have loved their neighbour as themselves. The many instances are necessary, first to show him the *possibility* of obeying the precept, and secondly to act as models or examples for his own conduct towards his neighbour. It is the same with most religious truths. Instance after instance have to be linked together in the course of religious instruction until the cumulative effect on the pupil's mind is such that he may be said really to believe the truth. When he fully believes that the truth is intended to influence his own conduct as that of all other people, then it

may be said that his intellectual assent to the truth is complete and unreserved. Such a complete intellectual assent is admittedly an ideal, yet the teacher who can gradually lead his pupils—for it cannot be done in a single lesson—some way towards this ideal assent will have done much for the child's religious life.

But even complete intellectual assent to a truth does not necessarily impel the individual to will and act in accordance with the truth. The intellect by itself has little if any driving force ; it may point out in the most unmistakable way how we should act, but it is emotion or feeling that is needed to drive the will, as it were, in the direction indicated by the intellect. As one writer[1] says, " The executive force of an idea almost always comes from its union with those real sources of power which we call the affective states." Of course, there is no such thing as a purely intellectual belief in a truth. The pupil who believes the precept " Love your neighbour as yourself," after having seen repeated instances of its practice in life, cannot but have some liking or affection for the idea of such a love. His liking for the individual who acts up to the precept passes in some measure to the precept itself. But the liking emotion for the precept *as a rule for himself* may be very weak and quite insufficient to drive him to will and act according to the precept. " It is necessary, therefore, if we would weld an idea solidly and indestructibly to a desired action, that we should fuse them together by the heat of an emotion."[2] The old Roman saying, " It is sweet and glorious to die for one's country," is by itself a cold kind of appeal for a recruiting poster. The most effective kind of appeal comes from the recruiting officer—be he

[1] Jules Payot, in *Education of the Will.* [2] Op. cit.

speaker or writer—who, moved himself by the patriotic deeds of those in the field, can also stir the emotions of others by vivid descriptions of those deeds. What is true of the recruiting officer holds true of the teacher. If he would win his pupils gradually for the service of the Kingdom of God he must himself be moved by the lessons he teaches, and must help to rouse similar emotions in his pupils. The repeated presentation of a spiritual truth in the above way in different lessons has, as we have previously said, a cumulative effect on the pupil's mind, heart, and will. This idea of a cumulative effect may be illustrated and emphasised by the aid of the following diagram. The diagram is based on the metaphor of a "stream of thought," or a "stream of consciousness," which the late Professor William James of America employed to describe one aspect of our mental life.[1]



Let the diagram represent the life or progress of one particular idea or truth in the child's mental life. Suppose it is the truth embodied in the story of Samuel's vision, that God calls upon men to serve Him. And suppose that the idea of this truth is conveyed to the pupil's mind from time to time through various stories, 1, 2, 3, etc., illustrative of the truth. Then each repetition of the idea, combined

[1] The diagram is not to be regarded as illustrative of Professor James's long and subtle analysis of the mental life given in his *Principles of Psychology*, vol. i. It is simply the present writer's means of emphasising the idea of a cumulative mental effect.

with the necessary emotional force, adds something to the first presentation of the truth. The flow, as it were, of the idea and its emotional force becomes fuller and stronger with each tributary instance, so that ultimately the idea reaches its fullest dynamic force and realisation in action. Now as this idea is not a something apart from the whole "active make-up"[1] of the individual, what we have called the driving force of the idea is just the *will* activity of the individual. Hence in training the individual to think and feel aright we are truly training him to *will* aright.

There is another and helpful way of looking at this close connection between thought, feeling, and will. The repeated presentation of the truth *habituates* the pupil to think the truth and to be moved by it; and the more deeply implanted is this *habit of thinking and feeling*, the more likely will the idea of the truth pass over into right action when the circumstances call for action. We are too apt to think of "habit" as applied to outward act alone, and too little of habit as applied to thinking and feeling. We must certainly give the child the opportunity of *doing* right actions over and over again, and the younger he is the more must we depend on his purely imitative instinct. But the only solid foundation on which we can hope to rear an intelligently spiritual life amongst our pupils is a *system of right thinking and feeling*, and such a system can only be formed by habitual right thinking and feeling.

There is one difficulty connected with the pupil's application of the truth which is apt to be entirely lost sight of in religious and moral instruction. A

[1] An expression of the American writer, Professor Dewey. See his *Educational Essays*, edited by Professor Findlay of Manchester.

person may be ever so willing to act up to a certain truth or a certain precept, but he may not always know when and how to act. This difficulty is a very real one with the child. The precept "Honour thy father and thy mother" may be thoroughly impressed on a child's mind and affections; but there are endless circumstances in which the child may unintentionally dishonour his parents; nor even when he reads that Jesus went down with His parents and "was subject unto them," is he any more helped in deciding *how* he is to honour his own parents. The presentation to him of stories of how other people have obeyed the precept shows him in what way he can honour his parents *in the same circumstances as his models*. In so far as those circumstances are similar to the circumstances in which he himself should apply the precept he has simply to follow his models. But it more often happens that the circumstances are more or less dissimilar, and the truth or precept does not tell him *just how to act* in every set of circumstances where the precept should be applied. He has to learn to *judge* when and how to apply the precept. This power of judging as to the course of action that will harmonise with a certain truth can only be developed through his experience of a variety of circumstances in which he has seen the precept applied. The more numerous these experiences are, the more fitted will the individual become to judge as to how he himself can obey the precept in a new set of circumstances. This need for training the child's judging power is thus an additional reason why the teacher should teach a truth through repeated concrete examples of the truth. The presentation of repeated examples not only secures the intellectual and practical assent of the pupil to the truths, but at the same time affords him opportunities of exercising

his judgment as to the ways and means of following the truth. In this exercise of judgment the pupil needs guidance: he will do little by himself at first. The teacher can help by directing attention to the varying circumstances and to the particular judgment and act that suited the circumstances. He can further help by discussing such cases as he knows are likely to occur in his pupils' own lives where they will be called upon to obey the precept. In this way by discussion and suggestion, he helps to prepare them to meet future possible situations with the right judgment and the appropriate act.[1]

[1] For the supreme importance of early training in developing sound and moral judgments, see Professor MacCunn's *The Making of Character*, part 3, chap. i.

CHAPTER IV

GENERAL METHOD IN TEACHING A RELIGIOUS TRUTH

In the light of the general considerations of the previous chapters we shall now discuss in some detail the method of teaching one particular religious truth. The truth which we choose for our purpose is that embodied in the story of God's call to Samuel, as recorded in the third chapter of the first book of Samuel. As we have already said, spiritual truths that appeal to the child are those that are exemplified in concrete form, that is in the actions of individuals. Further, the lesson may be taken as a type, not of all historical lessons that may be taught from the Bible, but of those historical lessons that contain some one or other religious truth applicable to and regulative of religious life.

Unlike some chapters in the Bible the third chapter of Samuel practically forms a complete sense-whole. Hence the whole chapter should be read by the teacher or some good reader amongst the pupils, or told in story form if the class is a very young one. It should be remembered that the Sunday school is not the place for teaching reading; and the teacher who, from a mistaken view, allows a class to blunder through the reading of the lesson makes the first false step in defeating the religious aim of the lesson. Time is wasted, the pupils' attention is taken up with the wrong thing—the mere mechanism of reading, and by the time the reading is finished their mental energy has been largely dissipated. Moreover, children have no particu-

lar desire to listen to each other's bungling efforts: the result is boredom, inattention, and even disorder. We must have an impressive reading of the lesson; and if this cannot be got from the class then the teacher must be prepared to give it.

The central idea of the lesson which we wish gradually to impress upon the pupils' minds is that God calls not only a Samuel but all men to serve Him. This is the dominant religious truth which stands out clearly in many Bible narratives amongst a variety of times and circumstances. We may entitle the lesson, "The Call of Samuel": the title is in harmony with the general truth which the teacher seeks ultimately to develop—God's call to all men. The title, however, like the title of every lesson, derives its full meaning and force from the lesson as understood and appreciated. At the beginning of the lesson the title is of more service to the teacher than to the pupil. To the teacher, who of course will have studied the lesson beforehand, the title is a short formula which should help him to keep in view the central truth right through the lesson process. To the pupil, the title ought to commend itself at the close of the lesson as an appropriate and easily remembered description of the central truth. We want this truth to be incorporated in the stream or flow of the pupil's mental life; and the shorter and more significant we can make the title, the more readily will this incorporation take place and the more readily will the idea revive and become a motive to action on the required occasion.

To mark out the stages of the lesson it will be convenient to use terms that are recognised amongst educationists as descriptive of the processes that the mind goes through in learning and believing any general truth and applying it in action. The terms

are Preparation, Presentation, Association (and Comparison), Generalisation, Application.[1] As our discussion of the lesson proceeds it will be seen that the terms are simply a more precise and formal way of marking out the relationship between the learner's thought, will, and action described in the previous chapter. And as we there found that the intellectual and practical assent of the pupil to a religious truth cannot be secured by his experience of a single instance of the truth, so the teaching of the single lesson—Samuel's call—will not take the pupil through all the above five stages. It may take him no further than the Presentation stage. That is, the result of the lesson may simply be to impress on the pupil's mind the fact that God once called a young lad Samuel to His service. On the other hand, the effect even of the single lesson should be to lead the pupil in some measure towards a greater *reverence* for God ; and in so far as this mental attitude leads the pupil to any kind of righteous action he may be said to *apply* the lesson without having gone through the previous stages of Association and Generalisation. But, as a rule, several lessons on different instances of the truth will be needed to take the pupil through the first four stages. These several lessons will therefore constitute one whole unit of a lesson on the general truth. As the single lessons of this unit will probably not come up in immediate succession in a Sunday school syllabus, the teacher must take care that the scattered lessons shall be so associated and correlated to one another as they come up that the pupil will ultimately be led through the whole five stages.

[1] The stages indicated by the above terms are known amongst educational writers as the Five Formal Steps.

Preparation Step

"Preparation" here means the preparation of the pupils' *minds*, and is a necessary step in any kind of lesson. By appropriate questioning the teacher calls up into the pupils' consciousness any ideas they may already have that are connected with the new knowledge to be presented. By means of those ideas the mind *assimilates* the new ideas. Thus if the pupils do not know the meaning of the word 'temple' in the third verse of the chapter, the teacher will first call up the idea "Church," and by means of this known idea which is related to the idea "Temple" the pupils can be led to understand the similarity and the difference between "Church" and "Temple." It is the *difference* between the two that constitutes the new knowledge, and the mind is said to *assimilate* the new knowledge through its similarity to the old.[1] Now even in the case of a single pupil, let alone a whole class, the teacher cannot at the beginning of the lesson hope to make a complete "preparation." For, as the lesson proceeds, ideas will crop up that are "new" to some if not all of the pupils. These ideas therefore must be taught through separate "preparations." It is evident, however, that if many such preparations have to be made in the course of the lesson, there is a risk that the pupils' attention will be distracted from the main and dominant truth contained in the lesson. The wise teacher solves the difficulty by refraining from explaining everything. He will deal just with those "new" ideas that are absolutely necessary to the understanding of the dominant idea or truth. He

[1] The mental process described above is generally known as "apperception." For a full and at the same time a simple account of the theory of "apperception," see Professor Adams's *Primer on Teaching*.

may explain some of these ideas before starting on the lesson proper. The idea "temple," for example, should certainly be known to the pupils before the story is even read or told. Apart from these subordinate preparations, the outstanding preparation step that must be made in our particular lesson is that which will lead the pupils' minds to assimilate the lesson to some former and similar lesson, such as the call to Abraham, the call to Moses, the call of the disciples. A brief recall of these lessons will prepare the pupils' minds to assimilate to the known instances of the truth the new instance—to them a specially interesting instance, as this time a young lad is the central figure. It is to be noted that such a preparation step involves the association of previously known instances of the truth to a new instance ; that is, the Association step is already operating at the beginning of the lesson. Then, when the pupils pass from this new lesson to other lessons in the lesson unit, the Association process will again be operative.

The circumstances that led to Samuel's call may have been considered in the previous lesson. Still it is advisable to bring these again into the pupils' mental foreground, so that the call and its origin or reason may be linked together. What, the teacher might ask, was the character of God's priests at this time ? How were they described in the previous chapter ? The Jewish people at the time were being badly guided by those who should have shown them a better example. Eli and his sons would have to give place to better teachers—to men who would serve God and their country in the right way. A high priest after God's own heart was much needed—who was he to be ? In some such language the teacher seeks to rouse expectancy and interest in the new lesson. It is

significant and instructive to note that this method of securing interest in new men and new ideas is frequently adopted by the Bible writers. Thus in verse thirty-five of the second chapter of 1 Samuel these words occur: "And I will raise me up a faithful priest that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind." The expectancy thus aroused by the writer finds its satisfaction when, in the next chapter, young Samuel is shown to be the promised priest. Again, in the case of Jesus, we find the same kind of expectancy and interest aroused by the prophetic utterances of the Old Testament prophets, and finally by the dramatic utterance of the "forerunner" John the Baptist. To say that the communication of important truths is best accomplished through previous notice and suggestion, is simply another way of stating the well-recognised teaching maxim that every lesson should produce in the pupil a desire to know more about the matter taught.

This reference to the circumstances that led to the call of Samuel may be regarded as a transition step from the Preparation step to the Presentation step which we shall now consider.

Presentation

This step consists in presenting the story *as a whole* to the pupils' minds. If the story is *told*, it should be told straight through with the minimum amount of incidental explanation. If it is to be read in its Biblical form, it should be first read as a whole. Why this procedure instead of the not uncommon one of reading and explaining verse by verse? Because it is the natural and most interesting way. Child and adult alike wish to know as soon as possible what a story, short or long, is all about. And the only way to get

young people to take a living, intelligent interest in the study of the details of a literary composition—be it a Bible narrative, parable, poem, novel, drama—is to allow them the pleasure of reading the composition first as a whole.

The method is in harmony with what we know to be the mental laws of learning. The mind gets to know a thing first as a whole and in a general way, and only after having acquired this general idea of the whole does it descend to an examination of details. Indeed it is through this first general idea of the whole that the details or parts of the whole are better understood. The other method—of presenting the story verse by verse—keeps the pupil too long in suspense over details before he can see the outcome of the whole lesson : so often in school instruction the learner cannot see the wood for the trees. Again by this method the pleasure and first fine emotional effect of the story is also unduly delayed, if indeed it is not altogether lost. Now, as we have urged in the previous chapter, it is just this emotional effect which, accompanying the teaching of a religious truth, has so much to do in making the truth determine conduct. It may be and often is objected that after such a first straightforward reading as we have suggested, the pupils will take no further interest in a detailed study of the parts of the narrative. Whether this be so or not will depend very much on the teacher. With skilful and enthusiastic teaching the first uninterrupted reading should create a nucleus of interest which can be expanded by a minuter study of details. But even were it impossible to rouse any further interest in details, still the emotional result of the first reading remains, and this from the point of view of *religious* teaching is of great value. In our lesson the central idea is easily grasped from a straight-

forward reading. The form of the narrative is such as to give special prominence to the idea : Samuel is represented as being called by God no less than four times. If the reading then does nothing more than impress the minds and hearts of the pupils with the fact that God once appeared in vision to a young lad in the Temple and called him to do a great work, it has done much for the pupils' religious development.

In any detailed discussion of the story the teacher should explain and emphasise only such details as will render the central truth more impressive. He will fail to do this if he obscures the truth by the presentation of too much merely informative knowledge. It is often the well-informed and enthusiastic teacher who is apt to err in this way. Let him exercise a wise restraint. The place (Temple) and the time (evening) of Samuel's call, as well as Samuel's youthfulness, are important as contributing to the emotional effect of the story. By the aid of his own imagination and graphic language the teacher should stimulate his pupils to picture the whole scene. Yet there must be no elaborate and distracting description of the Jewish temple : if such is necessary its place is in another and previous lesson. All the teacher need do here is to recall the pupils' mental picture of the Temple—or of a church—and to emphasise the fact that it was in God's holy temple where the aged Eli's young assistant heard God's call. But whilst emphasis must be placed upon such points as the place and time for the sake of the emotional effect, we should not allow our pupils to carry away the impression that the temple or the church is the only place where God calls upon men for service. Such an impression would be at variance with the *universality* of God's call which we wish our pupils gradually to appreciate. The teacher might well remind his pupils

that Abraham was called at his tent door, Moses in the desert country, some of Christ's disciples whilst they were at their daily work as fishermen. Senior pupils at least should be able to appreciate the conception that every place wheresoever a human being is urged by the inward call of God's spirit to fight for righteousness is, by virtue of such a summons, rendered a temple—that is a marked off or consecrated spot.

Association and Generalisation

These steps are so closely related that we shall treat them together. In the Association step the teacher takes his pupils outside the limits of the story of Samuel's call. By questioning he reminds the class of other instances of God's call to men, and so *associates* the call to Samuel to those other instances. (This association process may be going on, as we have seen, at the beginning of the lesson.) By means of this association the pupils are to compare the various stories and to perceive the central truth embodied in each of them, namely, God's appeal to some human being to act as the instrument or agent for carrying out His purposes. Is this enough then to convince the pupils that the truth has a universal application —that in a greater or less degree God calls upon all men, themselves included, to service? We think not. We have to guard against the notion arising that God's call has been restricted to specially chosen individuals, and that the call to Samuel and to other Bible characters is something altogether different from what does or could happen in our days and in our experience and is therefore inapplicable to us.[1] Such a notion is

[1] The following quotation from the Rev. E. J. Hardy's *The Unvarying East: Modern Scenes and Ancient Scriptures*, is illustrative of the attitude we refer to. "A few years ago a young woman about to visit the Holy Land called on an old lady friend who loved her

sufficient to render the religious truth inoperative in our pupils' lives. What the teacher must do, therefore, is to show the pupils that outside the sphere of the Bible records God has been and still is calling upon men as of old to do service for His kingdom of righteousness. It is the teacher's duty so to present the essential and spiritual truths of the Bible stories that they will still have a direct practical significance for the pupils' lives. And the Bible itself suggests the method by which he can do this. From the earliest Old Testament records right down to the latest New Testament records we can trace the idea of the continuity of God's intercourse with men. This intercourse is expressed by the sacred writers in different forms—first as a personal appearance, as in the case of the patriarchs, then later as a voice, then finally as a Spirit—the Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost, manifested in fullest perfection in the person and life of Jesus. It is through this last conception—Holy Spirit—that the teacher can bring the story of Samuel's call into vital relation to the pupils' own lives. Some writers on the religious education of the young hold that the conception of the Holy Spirit is beyond the understanding of the young mind. But whilst not even the adult mind can *understand* God's Holy Spirit, both child and adult can surely feel and know the influence of that mysterious spirit within us which moves us, on occasions, we know not how, towards good and righteousness. With this conception then before him, the teacher might lead his pupils along the following train of thought. In all the Divine calls about which we read in the

Bible. She told her she soon hoped to see Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Galilee, and all the places associated with the life of Christ. The old lady put down her work, removed her spectacles, and exclaimed: 'Well, now, I knew all these places were in the Bible, but I never thought of them being on the earth'."

Bible we notice that God somehow or other puts it into the minds and hearts of men to do something for the cause of righteousness. And all along the history of our race, the good and great men and women have been those who have felt and even heard a voice within them—a higher and more urgent voice than that of man—urging them on against obstacles innumerable to toil and struggle and sometimes to die for the good of their fellow-men. Witness such noble men as Wilberforce and Livingstone, such noble women as Florence Nightingale, Grace Darling, and the martyred Nurse Cavell. And in our very midst to-day there are many obscure and nameless individuals all working at the inner call of God's Holy Spirit, in no way different from the Samuels and the Pauls of Scripture or the Livingstones and Nightingales of modern times. Some good and well-meaning people may object that such a line of thought minimises the Divine character of the Bible calls and reduces them to the same level as the occasional inspirations we all have to battle for the right. May it not be replied that our interpretation helps pupils to view their daily life more and more from a Divine plane and to lift it more and more up to such a plane ? In spite of all the madness and misery of our time there are more evidences than ever there were of the working of God's spirit amongst men and women. In the sphere of social philanthropy what a goodly array our time is producing of men and women who may be truly said to be called of God and His Holy Spirit ! Such men and women are true " knights of the Holy Ghost," to use the poet Heine's picturesque epithet. When, therefore, Samuel's call and work can be associated in the minds of our pupils with the work of all those other knights, past and present, who have answered the call

of God's Spirit, then we have some assurance that they will believe in the universality of God's call. And when they are thus led to regard *themselves* as knights—humble knights it may be—of God, the idea of such knighthood and service is more likely to realise itself in action. *Only when the idea does issue in action can the teacher say that his teaching of the religious truth has been wholly successful.* This brings us to a brief consideration of the final step in teaching—or rather in *learning* the lesson, for the Application step is wholly the pupil's own work.

Application

Could the teacher follow his pupils out into the world of their daily activities he might be able to see how far his religious instruction was bearing fruit in action. But whilst he has largely to trust to his pupils' own application of the truths taught them, he can do much in the way of *suggesting* to his pupils possible applications in their daily life. A general precept or injunction such as, "Now, children, you must all be like young Samuel—obedient to God," or "You should all give your hearts to Jesus and follow Him," is too vague for guidance. The teacher must point out and discuss definite ways in which the pupils can render service to God. Let him point them, for example, to such children's organisations as the League of Mercy, The Band of Hope, the Guild of Courtesy, Boys' Brigade, Boy Scouts, etc.—organisations whose aim is not so much to learn about righteous acts as to *do* righteous acts. Let him urge that the boy or girl who unites with their fellows to help the poor, the weak, the unfortunate, the oppressed, is a true little knight of God, and may claim kinship with all the good and great in history who have served God

in serving their fellow-men. He will remind them of the exquisitely encouraging words of Jesus Himself—God's ideal Knight : "And the King shall answer and say unto them, 'Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren ye have done it unto Me.'" Nor will he omit to watch the records of the daily press for instances suitable to his purpose. The records of the activities of this eventful time provide him with material for illustrating and suggesting countless ways in which his pupils can translate the spiritual lesson of Samuel's call and service into their own living practice.

One possible misconception must be guarded against. Whilst we have rightly placed the Application step after those of Association and Generalisation, this does not imply that there must be no application till after the pupils have gone through a series of lessons involving the processes of association and generalisation. These processes, we have been anxious to prove, are necessary to convince the learner of the universality of the truth, and to habituate him to think and act in conformity with the truth. But, as the personal example of an individual who acts in accordance with the truth appeals to the child's imitative instincts, the teacher must consider the question of Application *from the very first time the truth is presented to the child.* Gradually, through the processes of Association and Generalisation, this imitative kind of Application must be converted into a more intelligent and sure kind of Application ; for only thus can the pupils be trained to live an *intelligently* religious and moral life.

The following summary may be helpful to the reader in gathering together in a single view the main points of the lesson we have discussed :

Summary

Preparation of pupils' minds to assimilate the truth —God's call to Samuel—by recalling any instances known to pupils of God's call, e.g. the call to Abram, to Moses.

Presentation of Lesson :

(1) Straightforward reading (or telling) of story as in chapter so that pupils shall gain a general impression of the dominant fact of God's call to Samuel to serve Him.

(2) Discussion of the story, involving explanation of

(*a*) The place : God's Holy Temple. (Yet, God's call is irrespective of any particular place.)

(*b*) The time : Evening, with its associations of rest and solemn quietness. (Yet God's call is irrespective of any particular time.)

(*c*) The person : Samuel—a young attendant in the Temple—a boy or youth like the pupils themselves.

(*d*) The call itself : The reason and the manner of it.

(*e*) Other points : But only in so far as their explanation will add clearness and vividness to the central idea of God's call.

Association of Samuel's call to other Bible calls—to Abram, Moses, Elijah, Christ Himself, His disciples, Paul ; also to all the good and great historical characters who have felt God's call (or Holy Spirit) within them, e.g. Wilberforce, Livingstone, Florence Nightingale, Grace Darling, Nurse Cavell, etc. The cumulative effect of this association on the pupils' intellect

and emotion is such that they come to understand and feel the force of the general truth or ultimate

Generalisation : that God's call is addressed to *all* men, in different circumstances and degrees, including the pupils themselves. Hence the teacher is justified in suggesting to his pupils such habitual

Applications of the general religious truth as are within their power, e.g. membership and service in such practical organisations as Leagues of Pity, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, etc. etc., or apart altogether from organisations, whenever the inner voice of their conscience urges them to fight against wrong and to battle for the right.

CHAPTER V

THE TREATMENT OF THE "MIRACULOUS" IN BIBLICAL INSTRUCTION

In the previous chapter we dealt with the story of God's call to Samuel as a literal occurrence and said nothing as to the question that is sure to present itself sooner or later to the pupil's mind—"Was it *true* that God actually spoke to Samuel?" The very young child does not ask this question. He accepts the Bible writer's statement in simple trust. Nor has he any less faith in the most wonderful happenings recorded in the Bible or elsewhere. The miracles of the Incarnation and Resurrection of Jesus, and the miracles that Jesus Himself wrought are all accepted unquestioningly. Yet as he grows in knowledge and experience of the material world around him, and finds that the miraculous does not conform to the ways in which things happen within his own experience, he learns to ask himself the doubting question, "Are they true stories?" Or are they in the same class as all the fairy and mythical tales which once he believed to be true? Once, for example, Santa Claus was for him real and true; but now he knows—he thinks he knows—better. The erstwhile mystery has "faded into the light of common day." The never-seen mysterious friend who once truly and really lived and brought him toys is after all only flesh and blood. And the more he learns how things are done on the material plane of man's existence, the weaker becomes his faith in the spiritual world of his earlier years. The old way of

explaining how some things happened in his life is false ; the new way—the scientific way—is true. Or, at least, what cannot be explained through his growing knowledge of the laws of the material world, is of doubtful truth. He may not be an unbeliever—but he is sceptical. The desire for what they call true stories is so strong in some children that they want to be assured that a story is true before they read it. This critical attitude, although not openly expressed, can be detected amongst children even of ten years of age, and by the age of fifteen or sixteen thoughtful readers of the Bible narratives are beginning to ask " How can these things be ? " For lack of guidance many go on conforming to the conventions of religion, without intelligence and without faith, whilst others reject the " miraculous " and all the Church doctrine associated with it. Even when the necessary instruction and guidance is given, it is frequently too long delayed, and the result is that the message of the pulpit never reaches large masses of the youth of our land. If the young require to be systematically trained to understand and appreciate the material aspects of the world, surely they need a like kind of training to appreciate the spiritual aspects.

Now, if the critical attitude towards the Bible appears amongst our young people at a comparatively early age, and if the miraculous elements in the Bible are regarded as essential and fundamental in our Christian religion, then it becomes a momentous question for the Christian Church and its teachers " How shall we guide the rising generation into an intelligent faith in such mysteries as the Incarnation and the Resurrection ? " These recorded happenings are unique amongst happenings ; they apparently run counter to all other happenings within man's experi-

ence. If we cannot explain *how* they happened, in the same way as we can explain how ignited gunpowder can send a cannon-ball hurtling through space, we must at least have evidence that in some sense or other they *did* happen. Otherwise we cannot sincerely think of them as true happenings, and still less can we think of them as having any practical bearing on our life.

The evidence for such miraculous happenings as the Incarnation is partly historical. It consists of the testimony of actual eye-witnesses of the events either directly recorded by themselves or indirectly by other writers to whom they communicated their experiences Now, however inspired the sacred writers of the New Testament may have been, this inspiration did not render them infallible reporters of what they saw or heard. Hence their testimony, like all fallible testimony, must be subject to the test of the Laws of Evidence : nothing less will satisfy the modern reflective mind familiar as it is with the careful sifting cross-examination of witnesses in our Courts of Justice. In applying these tests to the New Testament records the Higher Critics have done a good deal to shake the old beliefs that the miracles occurred exactly in the way described by the Bible writers. And because faith has been shaken in the *mode* of the miracle, there is a tendency to disbelieve that any miraculous event at all took place. Because there may be inconsistencies and contradictions in the records of those who saw or heard of the Risen Christ, the Resurrection itself is discredited. The appeal to historical testimony therefore has not done much—whatever it may yet do—to establish faith in the miraculous elements of our Christian creed. Even to argue that some unique kind of event must have

occurred before so many witnesses could have spoken about the Risen Christ, does not carry us very far. If there was some reality and not a mere fancy behind all the talk of those witnesses, the modern mind asks for some kind of evidence or proof of that reality. And it seems eminently worth while to try to introduce this evidence in some systematic way to the attention and study of the senior and Bible classes connected with our Churches. Hitherto, as we have already said, this has been either neglected or too long delayed. If the Churches and the teachers can do something to develop a lively conviction amongst youth that God did and still does directly intervene in human affairs to succour individuals and nations consciously striving after righteousness, what a source of strength would this be to the rising generation in all their social efforts to bring the Kingdom of Heaven to earth. A well-grounded and real faith in God's co-operative action would be the faith which Jesus meant when He said to His disciples, " If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove ; and nothing shall be impossible unto you " (Matthew 17. 20). The old theologians used to urge men to " practise the presence of God." If we could practise this presence in all our activities, if we could believe that when Nature's laws are proving too strong for us Nature's God is ready to our prayerful call, then in Christ's words nothing might be impossible to us.[1] It is true that in times of

[1] It is significant that one of the most striking professions of faith in such help was recently made by Britain's War Chief, Sir William Robertson, in a letter to the Bishop of London : " A serious determination on the part of the nation to seek and deserve Divine help would, we may hope, enable us to take a true perspective of the war, and it would undoubtedly furnish valuable help to our gallant sailors and soldiers at the front, as well as lighten the heavy burden of responsibility now carried by the various authorities at home and abroad."

great personal or national stress we are startled into a vague kind of recognition that God is "in action" in our very midst. This recognition sometimes finds expression in national invocation for help and thanksgiving for deliverance; both the invocation and the thanksgiving imply some degree of belief in the miraculous. But do we ever so free ourselves from the ordinary way of explaining our deliverance as to admit with whole-hearted faith that not our own feeble methods but God's sovereign methods saved us? Obsessed with the passion for a scientific explanation of every happening, we are averse from granting that there may be a spiritual and higher kind of explanation that includes the scientific explanation or at least that does not run counter to it. Our modern use of such elastic terms as Providence, God's Providence, seems to conceal the reservation at the back of our minds that somehow or other all life's happenings could be explained in terms of material causes and effects. Even such a statement as "God blew with His winds and they were scattered," which appeared on the medal struck to commemorate the defeat of the Spanish Armada, we are apt to regard as fanciful and on a par with all those Old Testament utterances which voiced the belief of the prophets in God's intervention in human affairs. And when we hear talk of the angels at Mons we are ashamed of the human credulity that can still obtain in a scientific age. And as for the "Miracle of the Marne" the expression is due more to a fondness for alliteration than to any belief in miracle.

The kind of evidence or explanation that will produce a well-grounded faith in God's miraculous dealings, without running counter to our belief in scientific law, is indicated by the Apostle Paul in his definition of faith. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for,

the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11. 1). The definition applied to his own faith in God's miraculous ways and particularly in the supreme miracle of Redemption. This faith was supported by the evidence of things-not-seen, that is, immaterial or spiritual things. The evidence was something that was disclosed not to his bodily senses, nor to his reasoning, but to what we call intuition, inner vision, or spiritual insight. This intuition has been defined as "the kind of *intellectual sympathy* by which one places oneself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible."[1] It is a way or a power of knowing the inmost reality of a thing or happening. Every one has this power in some degree. After we have learned all that science can teach us about our individual bodies and minds, we still feel or intuite an inner spiritual something that is the most real thing about us, and that cannot be described or explained. We simply grasp this unique reality in one simple act of intuition. But this intuitive power by which we grasp the spiritual reality of ourselves can be used to grasp what is unique and inexpressible in other persons and things. This is most evident in the work of great painters, poets, or musicians. What, for example, makes the artist's picture? Not the colours which he mixes on his palette and transfers to his canvas—these are only his means of expression; not the model which sits to give him direction in his composition; not the skill with which he portrays the reality in his representation; what makes the picture is the artist's vision, his entry into the very life of his subject by sympathy, something that he never succeeds in expressing perfectly, though

[1] Professor Henri Bergson's *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 6. Translated by T. E. Hulmes.

the imperfect expression may reveal to us more than we could see without it.[1] What is here said of the genius in Art is equally true of great religious geniuses such as Paul. Paul entering into the very life of his subject by sympathy intuited Christ as the incarnate Son of God; and though he never succeeded in perfectly expressing his spiritual knowledge he revealed to the men of his time more than they could see by themselves. The way of knowing a thing through intuition is, therefore, quite compatible with the way of knowing it through science. Intuition is concerned with the thing-not-seen, the spiritual reality; science is concerned with the outward modes or manifestations of this reality. Science may seek to disprove the *mode* of Christ's Incarnation—the story of the Virgin Birth; it cannot and does not seek to disprove the *fact* of Incarnation. The increasingly sympathetic attitude of Science towards the miraculous elements of the Christian faith is well expressed in the following words of Sir Oliver Lodge. In discussing the doctrine of the Incarnation he says, "We are all incarnations, all sons of God in a sense, but at that epoch a Son of God in the supremest sense took pity on the race, laid aside His majesty, made Himself of no reputation, took upon Him the form of a servant, a minister, entered into our flesh, and lived on the planet as a peasant, a teacher, a reformer, a martyr. This is said to have literally happened; and as a student of science I am bound to say that, so far as we can understand such an assertion, there is nothing in it contrary to accepted knowledge. I am not testifying to it because it is a conventional belief, I am testifying because I have gradually become assured of the possibility of such an incarnation. The historical testimony in its favour is

[1] See *Henri Bergson: The Philosophy of Change*, p. 49, by H. W. Carr.

entirely credible. The Christian Churches have hold of a great truth. This is what I want people to realise distinctly and forcibly and without any convention. Freed, if possible, from the blinkers of custom, it can be recognised as a reality. All that the Churches say about it need not be true, is not all likely to be true ; but something is true much better than they say—something which they and we together are gradually rising to understand."[1]

But it may be said, as it has been said, that although we cannot prove the merely fanciful nature of these realities, they may be fanciful, mere hallucinations, as far as we know. To this there are two replies. The first is virtually found in the following statement : "The effect of the innumerable personifications of poetry is to leave the mind with the sense that the poets in some way, so far as personification is not a mere trick and convention (it is often so in the case of poor poetry), feel themselves constantly confronted with a spirit world unseen by man, but none the less real."[2] What is here said of the poets may be said with equal truth of the inspired writers of the Bible narratives. We cannot read the utterances of the Old Testament seers and poets without feeling that the writers were trying to express some intimate communion which they had with some divine reality. The fact that some of their ideas about God were very crude and even opposed to our modern ideas does not disprove the reality of their communion with the Divine : it only proves that the capacity to see God aright was at first weak and had to grow by exercise : the revelation of God is progressive, and involves not only seeing truly but seeing falsely. Again, in spite of the incon-

[1] *Reason and Belief*, pp. 45, 46.
[2] *Metaphor in Poetry*, by J. G. Jennings.

sistencies in the Gospel narratives of the story of Christ's resurrection, we feel that time and again the disciples were convinced of the presence of the Lord amongst them, in a way in which they could not have been convinced unless He had been actually there in some form or other.[1] It is the same with the Apostle Paul's writings. Paul's spiritual vision of the Risen Christ was no hallucination, but an intense reality—so intense that his whole life and preaching was one sustained effort to convince others of the reality. Over and over again in his letters to the different Churches he shows that he himself recognises the difficulty of communicating his vision of the "Mystery of Christ" to others and in getting them to believe in it. Thus to the Galatians he writes, "But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached by me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians I. 11–12). That is, we may say, just as Jesus Himself had a supreme consciousness or intuition of God the Father, so Paul had a supreme consciousness or intuition of Jesus as a spiritual reality and force in his own life. The Pauline theology—the Pauline explanations and theories about the Resurrection—may be modified with our advancing insight into the ways of the Divine, but Paul's faith in the reality of the Resurrection itself is a fact that cannot be dismissed as hallucination. The attitude which the teacher should adopt towards such a fact and all the other facts of religious experience recorded in the Bible is well expressed by Professor Lodge from whom we have already quoted. "This, then, I think, should be our attitude to that part of God's revelation of Himself which is given in inspiration. We should not

[1] See W. Temple's *The Faith and Modern Thought*, p. 79.

in any sense try to silence our intellects; but we should say,—Here are the great facts of religious history; here are the facts which any true account of the matter has got to include and be just to; and any crude, rough-and-ready rationalism which leaves out those facts, or leaves them unaccounted for, or calls them hallucination, is thereby self-condemned. They are the most important facts in life. But still we may say, that the man who found the facts may not perhaps have found a theory"[1] to account for the facts.

The second reply to the objection that these spiritual realities may be mere fancies of the writers consists in asking the doubter to test their truth in a direct way —that is by trying to see them for himself by the same *kind* of inner vision as that of the inspired writers. This trying involves a sympathetic willingness to read and appreciate the records of the revelation. This is indeed the first condition of understanding and appreciating the truth of any man's writings. It is the condition under which we must learn to appreciate the insight of any great painter or musician. There must be a will to see and believe, not a repugnance. Jesus Himself referred to this necessary condition of spiritual insight when He said, "He that hath ears to hear let him hear." Given the will to believe on the part of a learner, the reading of the spiritual records of inspired men generates the power of seeing and grasping the spiritual vision. It was constant contact with Jesus that led His disciples gradually to appreciate in some measure the spiritual significance of His sayings, and to recognise their Master as the unique Son of God.

But more than this. Whilst the will to believe

[1] Op. cit., p. 45.

generates the power of grasping the reality of a spiritual revelation, the truth of this revelation may be further confirmed by its adequacy to satisfy the inmost desires and hopes of men. To use the language of a practical philosophy, belief or faith in the spiritual revelation "works." Job's bitter cry "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him," surely expresses the desire of men to know God, not only as a conception or the Word as St. John expresses it, but as a living concrete reality; and to those who have the will to believe, the Word made flesh in Jesus Christ fully meets the desire. Paul's spiritual vision of the Risen Christ was fully adequate to meet his fervent desire and hope of immortality, and what is true of Paul is true of all who have grasped the spiritual reality of Christ and of his resurrection. Is it not some intuition, however dim, of the truth of Christ that is to-day acting as the motive force behind many of those acts of supreme self-sacrifice of which the world is now witness?

Our consideration of the twofold aspect of truth—the material and the spiritual—involves a practical corollary for the teacher. To the youth's question "Are the Bible records of God's intervention and succour records of true happenings?" he must be prepared to explain, along some such lines as we have suggested, the truth and reality of the facts of Spirit. Thus in dealing with the various crises in the history of the Jewish nation, he will point out how convinced were the inspired writers when they declared their belief in God's mysterious presence and intervention. Whatever ordinary explanation may be attempted to account for such an incident as the destruction of Sennacherib's army, the teacher will do well to emphasise the inspired writer's belief in God's action as

the direct response to Hezekiah's prayer and the fundamental explanation of Israel's deliverance. But outside the history of the "Chosen People," the teacher can point to times in our own history when reflective minds are driven to acknowledge "the hand of God" in shaping the individual and the nation. In the midst of to-day's fiery trial the recognition of "God's hand" is voiced by some of our younger poets in the language of deep spiritual insight; and no better material for Bible-class study at this present time can be found than the utterances of such poets as the late Rupert Brooke. The following sonnet, breathing as it does a firm faith in God's "mysterious ways," should take a worthy place alongside the best Bible literature.

Now, God be thanked Who has matched us with His hour,
And caught our youth, and wakened us from sleeping,
With hand made sure, clear eye, and sharpened power,
To turn, as swimmers into cleanness leaping,
Glad from a world grown old and cold and weary,
Leave the sick hearts that honour could not move,
And half-men, and their dirty songs and dreary,
And all the little emptiness of love!

Oh! we, who have known shame, we have found release there,
Where there's no ill, no grief, but sleep has mending,
Naught broken save this body, lost but breath;
Nothing to shake the laughing heart's long peace there
But only agony, and that has ending;
And the worst friend and enemy is but Death.[1]

The same kind of vision and faith is to be found in another soldier poet of to-day:—

And in the soldier's sacrifice
I saw the Christ's in its degree:
A sinful life—let it suffice,
He laid it down for you and me.

[1] 1914 *and other Poems*, twelfth impression, p. 11. (Quoted with the kind permission of the publishers, Messrs. Sidgwick and Jackson, London.)

For one a little cross of deal,
For One the Age-Enduring Tree;
Yet each frail, faltering flesh did feel
In hands and feet the wounding steel;
Each died that mankind might be free,
Each gave a life for you and me.[1]

The numerous instances of noble self-sacrifice of which the Great War has already been witness afford excellent occasions to the teacher for emphasising the reality of the mystery of Christ's sacrifice. Boys and girls in the senior classes of our Sunday schools can quite well understand how the sacrifice of many a soldier, sailor, many a doctor, many a nurse is "the Christ's in its degree," helping to free the world from the bondage of sin and making it at-one-ment with God. If ever the Sunday school teacher was called upon to deviate from a hard and fast syllabus of religious instruction it is to-day, with its many living object lessons in the potency of the deep things of Spirit and of God who is Spirit. The teacher who can use these lessons to enable the pupils to see that the miracle of sacrifice and atonement is being repeated on the battle-fields of Europe to-day, will do much for the development of that real and lively vision of God which has become dimmed by the mists of modern materialism, yet without which, as the prophet of old profoundly said, "the people perish."

In dealing with some of Christ's miracles as recorded in the Gospels, we cannot get over the fact that the teacher is confronted with very great difficulties—but only if he attempts to explain the miracles. In the case of the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, it is futile to explain further than to say that there

[1] From "At the Dawn," in *Ballads of Battle*, by Lance-Corporal Joseph Lee, 1/4th Battalion Black Watch. (Quoted with the kind permission of the publisher, John Murray, London.)

may be some hidden meaning underlying the writer's report of the miracle. After all, the miracles that seem to be in no way reconcilable with our existing knowledge are very few, and need not stultify our instruction in the reality of the vital elements of our Christian creed. It is the purpose and significance of each of Christ's miracles that the teacher should emphasise, and not the *mode* of the miracle. It is the spiritual significance of the miracle that constitutes its worth for the religious life. To explain away the recorded miracle of feeding five thousand people with a few loaves and fishes, is not to explain away the infinitely greater miracle of the all-sufficiency of the spiritual Christ for the most vital needs of men.

CHAPTER VI

THE STORY-TELLING MEANS OF RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

In the case of those children to whom the reading and understanding of the Bible language present considerable difficulties Bible truths must be taught through the medium of story-*telling*. There is a saying that "telling is not teaching." Whether story-telling is or is not teaching depends largely on the purpose and method of telling the particular story. To interrupt a lesson that is not proving attractive to a class by interposing some irrelevant story as a sedative to the consequent restlessness, is not teaching. Generally in such a case the mental restlessness has simply been converted into a dull, passive, and uneducative kind of attention. Then much also depends on the method of telling the story. The story of the Prodigal Son may be told in a way to call forth the child's active attention, thinking, and expression: that is teaching. Or the same story may be told in such a way as to send children to sleep.

We all feel the difference—whether we can explain it or not—between a good and a bad raconteur or story-teller. To whichever class a teacher may happen to belong, he will be all the better fitted to use the story-telling method of instruction if he has a conscious knowledge of the conditions and principles underlying all good story-telling. This knowledge is particularly necessary and helpful in converting the

Bible material into stories suitable both in matter and language[1] for young children.

In the first place the teacher must thoroughly know the story in the form it is to be told to his pupils. That is, he must be prepared to give such a rendering or version of the story as will be easily understood by the pupils. To help him in this he may have recourse to the many published books of the Bible stories for children ; but he will find it more profitable and more interesting to prepare his own versions in the light of a few well-recognised principles of story construction. He will further be better able to prepare suitable versions of many non-Biblical stories whose high religious value is apt to be lost sight of in Sunday school instruction.

In dealing with some of the Bible stories the language must be considerably simplified, without however introducing childish expressions and flabby sentimentalisms. In some of the Bible narratives the matter itself must be somewhat condensed to form a suitable story for young children. For example, the long account in Genesis, chapters 44 and 45, of Joseph's dealings with Benjamin and his other brothers immediately before revealing himself as their long lost brother, forms a complete story in a series of stories on Joseph, and cannot well be broken up into two parts without the loss of interest and effectiveness. The teacher must therefore condense this account without omitting any of the essential points. In other

[1] Yet it should be the aim of the religious teacher, as it is of every good English teacher, gradually to lead children to an appreciation of the " Bible Rhythm " of the English Bible—" a musical movement which for *naïveté* and pathos in the narrative portions, for music, variety, splendour, and sublimity in the purely lyrical portions is above all the effects of English poetic art, above all the rhythms and all the rhymes of the modern world " (Watts-Dunton's *Poetry and the Renascence of Wonder*, pp. 142, etc.

cases the teacher will have to expand the Bible statements into details which his imagination will supply. The story of the destruction of Sennacherib's army is told by the sacred writer in a single "verse." "And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses." On the adult reflective mind the effect of the bald, undetailed statement is very impressive. It is not so on the child, to whom picturesque details make a more forcible appeal. The last stanzas of the poet Byron's poem, "The Destruction of Sennacherib," are a fine illustration of the kind of details that will help the child to picture the whole scene, and to realise more vividly the contrast between the noisy might and panoply of the Assyrian host and the silent and mysterious power of God.

In using the Bible material for a story the teacher should take care that his story ends at the right point. Occasionally writers of Bible stories for children forget this. In following the Bible version verse by verse they go beyond the real ending of the story, with the result that the effect is partly spoiled. Thus in one publication the writer, following the story of Jairus's daughter, as it is given in Luke, chapter 8, finishes his version with the following sentence, "And Jesus told them to give her some food and then He told those with Him not to spread abroad the news of what He had done." The last injunction does not really belong to the story. To add the injunction, in telling the story to children, sets up a train of thought as to why Jesus gave such a seemingly unnatural command. The story ends with the astonishment of the parents—"And her parents were astonished," and this astonish-

ment, with its implied reverence for Jesus, should find an echo in the minds and hearts of children who listen to the story. This should on no account be weakened by the later kind of astonishment produced by adding the injunction "not to spread abroad the news." Either the injunction should be explained—a somewhat difficult point for children, or omitted altogether.

Were it an unheard-of practice there would be no need to refer to it: but on no account should the teacher depend on book or paper during the telling of a story. The writer has met some young teachers who, dubious of their powers of story-telling, wrote out a suitable version of their story and then read this to their class. The written form may be better in some respects than the oral; but the procedure is very unnatural and wooden, and involves more loss than gain. Much of the effect of story-telling to children depends on the facial expression, the gesture, and the sincere spiritual glow of the teacher, and these are not much in evidence when the teacher embarrasses himself with book or paper.

Whatever modifications of the Bible or other material may have to be made in preparing a suitable version of a story, the version must conform in its main outlines to the general plan of every story—short or long—that is recognised as literary or artistic. This plan is really based on well-known laws of human thought and feeling, and hence a story built up on the plan produces a greater effect than one that does not conform to the plan. If we reflect on the procedure of any effective story-writer or story-teller we find that it is somewhat as follows. First they put clearly and deliberately before us the place, time, and circumstances in which the action of the story begins. And

they do this in such a graphic way as to create an "atmosphere" of interest and expectancy from the very start. Next they lead us from one clearly marked stage or "moment" of the action to another until our rising interest and "suspense" reaches its height with the climax of the story. Then they more or less gradually relieve our suspense by disclosing to us how the climax is ended—whether "all ends well" or it may be badly. The plan is more or less discernible in many of the Bible narratives, which were written by men who not only were inspired but who wrote in a form fitted to produce the greatest effect on their fellow-countrymen.

In accordance with the above plan, the following is the kind of summary which the teacher should have *in his mind*, in telling the story of the Good Samaritan. Such a summary with its divisions and subdivisions has the effect of imposing on the story-teller's mind a certain number of natural pausing places, and thereby securing that deliberateness in telling so necessary to the effect of the story.

Opening Scene or Situation

A Jewish traveller riding all alone, probably during the day, on the lonely robber-infested road between Jerusalem and Jericho.

Development of the Action

1. He is suddenly set upon by a band of robbers, furiously beaten, and robbed of nearly all he has.

2. As he lies half-dead with shock and pain, a priest comes riding along, looks across at him, and passes on without giving any help.

3. Some time afterwards a Levite appears—comes near and looks at the wounded Jew—and then he also passes on without giving any help.

4. Next comes a Samaritan, one of a race at deadly enmity with the Jews ; hence no apparent hope of help from the Samaritan. The case of the wounded traveller seems wellnigh hopeless, both to himself and to the reader or hearer of his story. (The Climax.)

5. Yet the Samaritan does not " pass by " : instead he binds up the Jew's wounds, places him on his own horse, leads him to an inn, and arranges for his being taken care of till his recovery.

Whilst appropriate pauses must be made to enable the listeners to grasp the successive stages of the story, it is unwise to disturb the interest in the development of the action by too many explanations and reflections. Yet the putting of an occasional question at the right moment may not only help to maintain the active attention of the pupils, but may be a direct means of emphasising an important point in the story. Thus immediately after the class has been told about the priest's coming on the scene, the question may be asked, " What would you expect a priest to do to the helpless Jewish traveller ? " The contrast between what he should have done and what he did do emphasises the effect on the pupils' minds of the Samaritan's action later on.

A similar question might be asked when the Levite appears. The question should certainly be asked when the Samaritan appears on the scene ; for this is the Climax of the story, and the interpolated question and pause exactly correspond to the frame of mind produced by a climax. By this timely questioning the pupils are invited to be active and not merely passive listeners: their judgment is being rightly called into exercise about the points of the story on which they must judge if the story is to have an influence on their own mental attitude and action. One kind of interruption

the teacher should avoid—the interruption to check small offences of inattention and restlessness. It diverts the general attention of the class from the story, and is of very doubtful value in securing better attention and discipline. In most cases a slight pause and a look at the offender will be more helpful. After all, as every experienced teacher of young children knows, the restless kind of child during a lesson is not necessarily an inattentive child.

Suggested Version of the Story for a Junior Class

[*Opening Scene.*] [*Explanatory Notes.*]

In the land where Jesus lived there was once a Jew who had to travel one day from the big city of Jerusalem to another city called Jericho.

Bible statement.

(Map may be used here with pupils of nine to ten years of age.)

Now—the road between these two cities was a very lonely one, scarcely a house and very few people to be seen all along the road. There were plenty of robbers, however, ready to dash out of their hiding-places in the hills, and to rob any traveller who happened to be on the road.

Added picturesque details for children.

[*The Action.*]

[1] Well—when the Jewish traveller came to a certain very lonely part of the road, a band of robbers suddenly sprang out of their hiding-place and attacked him. They beat him in a most cruel way, tore his clothes,

and robbed him of all his money. Then they left him lying by the roadside, half-dead with fright and with the pain from his wounds.

[2] As he lay by the roadside, unable to move on account of his wounds, and wondering how he was to get help, he saw a priest in the distance. What might the Jew then think? That surely the priest would help him. Why? (Various answers.) Well, a priest was a man something like the minister or clergyman in our own Churches. And so he was expected to be kind and helpful to all those Jews who were in need of help.

The climax to this part of the story.

But how disappointed the Jew must have been when the priest—one of his own ministers—only came and looked at him, and then passed on without doing anything to help him.

The pause before stating how the climax ended.

[3] Some time after the priest had passed, another traveller came in sight. As he came nearer, the wounded Jew saw that this was another kind of priest—a Levite, as he was called—"What might the wounded Jew now think?" Surely *this* priest will do something to help me. But no—children—he also only came and looked at the wounded Jew, and then passed on without giving any help.

This is a climax to this part of the action and therefore demands deliberate pausing.

[4] Well—a long time after the

Levite had passed, the Jew saw a Samaritan riding towards him. Now, children, the Samaritan people, although they lived near the Jewish people, were hated by the Jews—and so the Jews and the Samaritans would have nothing to do with each other. "Would the wounded Jew then expect any help from the Samaritan who was riding towards him?" "No." "Had the Jew received any help from his own priests or ministers?" "No." "Was it likely, then, that the Samaritan would help him?" "No." By this time the Jew might well think there was no hope of help.

A necessary explanation not given in the Bible narrative.

This recall is necessary to answer the next question.

And yet, children, strange to say—the moment the Samaritan saw the Jew lying wounded and helpless, he felt very sorry for him, and immediately jumped off his horse to help him. He stopped the bleeding of the Jew's wounds by pouring some oil and wine upon them, and then bound them up with some cloth. Next he carefully lifted him up and placed him upon his horse, and then led him to a house where travellers could get food and rest—an inn as we call it. The Samaritan stayed all night at the inn with the wounded Jew. Next morning the Samaritan had to go farther on his journey; but before leaving he handed some money to the

Climax of the whole action, hence the need of deliberate pausing.

landlord of the inn, and told him to look well after the wounded Jewish traveller until he had recovered from his wounds.

In this chapter we have been confining attention strictly to the Presentation step in story-telling as a means of religious training. But however young the children may be to whom the story is told, the other steps referred to in Chapter IV must not be lost sight of by the teacher. The Sunday school story is told in order to produce something more than a kind of æsthetic pleasure and a comfortable *feeling* of goodness. If it were not so, then the teacher might simply tell the story and have done with it. But the story is meant to drive home some moral truth and, as we have already shown, skilful handling of the other teaching steps helps the driving process. The moral truth underlying a story is not always obvious even to the adult mind, and even when it is obvious we are apt to regard its *application* in a detached and impersonal kind of way.

The story of the good Samaritan was Christ's reply to the lawyer's question, " But who is my neighbour ? " But it was not a direct answer. Christ did not say, as the lawyer wanted Him to say, who were and who were not a man's neighbours. What Christ did show was the ideal neighbourliness that the lawyer (and all other men) should practise. This is the whole point or moral of the story ; and if the pupils do not in some measure grasp the truth and realise that it applies to themselves the religious aim in telling the story is lost. The only stories that may be allowed to point their own moral to children are those that

clearly illustrate some truth they already know. But even when the truth is seemingly very obvious the teacher should remember that the child is so often taken up with the incidental and unessential details in a story that he fails to see the underlying truth. The truth then must be clearly and unmistakably set forth before him. This may be done at the beginning or at the end of the story, or partly during the story. The question for the teacher is "which will be the most effective place to state the moral?" Will children be more ready to listen to the moral before the story, or after the story? As a rule, before the story, *and because of the prospect of the story.* In this case the statement of the truth forms a kind of Preparation step to the Presentation of the story. Thus if the teacher can get his class to understand in some measure Christ's idea of true neighbourliness, this prepares them for the story which illustrates the idea.

But there is no reason why the moral should not also be emphasised at the end of the story. True, as Professor Adams says, "The end is the fatal place, probably because the interest has naturally run down just at this point."[1] It is a fatal place for a teacher who indulges in vague sermonising and admonition of the "Now you must be all good children" type. But the end need not be such a fatal place for the teacher who can substitute for the "run down" interest in the story a new interest in discussing definite applications of the truth within the power of the pupils. We have already indicated in Chapter IV the lines along which the teacher can help children to convert the intellectual idea of a spiritual truth into a practical ideal of conduct. Through question and answer he can encourage children to suggest ways and means by

[1] *Exposition and Illustration in Teaching*, p. 321.

which they can act the Good Samaritan in their own lives. In this way the pupils themselves are made to emphasise the truth in the best possible way—by making their own personal application of the truth. There is a subtle truth in Professor Adams's remark—"If we hear a story, and ourselves make the necessary application to our own case, we feel that it is we who are teaching ourselves and not others who are teaching us."[1]

Some of the most suitable and best told stories for Sunday school work at the present time are to be found in *The Little Paper* edited by Arthur Mee as a supplement to his well-known periodical *My Magazine*. The method by which the writer secures effect in the following story is well worth study, and may be compared with the Bible story of the Good Samaritan.

Story of the Man who Hated the Germans[2]

They are talking now on the East Coast of a fine example of this spirit of heroism [which inspires men to acts of sublime courage, not merely towards friends and comrades, but towards their foes]. The hero of it is unnamed, but he is the skipper of the little trawler which we are to know as the *King Stephen*, a trawler which drags now, not for fish, but for torpedoes and submarines. Her skipper is a big, raw-boned veteran, whose experiences of the war have taught him to hate the savage German, whom he has seen red-handed at his fell work against passengers on peaceful ships. It would be "Heaven help the Germans!" if ever he had a chance of getting at them. So he said, and his day came. [Note here how expectation and interest are roused in the opening situation.] He came right

[1] Op. cit., p. 265.

[2] From *The Little Paper*, August, 1916, p. 7, by the kind permission of the Editor.

up against a submarine, which popped right up from below and tried to sink him. Our captain had a neat little gun on board, and with his first shot he blew a German sailor off the submarine's deck into the sea, while his third and fourth and fifth landed plump on the conning tower of the enemy and sank her. There were other submarines in the locality, and the skipper was about to make off, when he heard a cry of distress from the water. There was an injured German. And the man who hates the Germans, without a moment's hesitation, plunged overboard, rescued his enemy, brought him in safety to the ship, and carried him to be healed in an English hospital.

CHAPTER VII

THE AIMS AND MODES OF QUESTIONING IN RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

In Chapter III we were wholly concerned with discussing the general method of leading pupils through the stages of learning a religious truth and of applying it in practice. Little was said about the part which questioning must play in any teaching process. Yet it may truly be said that he who cannot ask children questions properly cannot teach them properly. For a full discussion of the art of questioning as a method of instruction the reader is referred to the numerous manuals on teaching. Here we shall try to set forth some of those aspects of the "question and answer" method which are specially worthy of the attention of the Sunday school teacher.

In putting a question to his pupils the teacher has to consider: first, the *purpose* of the question; second, the *form* of the question, that is the way in which it is expressed. From the point of view of their purpose, questions may be regarded as either *testing* questions or *training* questions. Some questions serve both purposes at the same time.

The aim of a *testing* question is simply to find out what a pupil knows. The Sunday school superintendent who wishes to grade his pupils according to their Biblical knowledge may put such questions to a newcomer. The class teacher who wishes to find out how much of his instruction has been remembered and understood by his pupils, may conduct an oral or

written examination, the questions in which are a test of his pupils' knowledge—and at the same time, he should remember, of his own teaching skill. Some of these testing questions may indirectly contribute towards the real training of the pupils—for example, those that help to grade the pupils properly. For the most part, however, they are simply tests and may not contribute one whit towards real spiritual training. It is only too true that in preparing his pupils for examinations, conducted by some outside authority, the Sunday school teacher, like his brother teacher in the day school, is apt to forget the teaching or training aim of questioning. And if preparation for examinations should not be the main aim of the day school teacher, much less should it be the aim of the Sunday school teacher. It cannot be too often reiterated that whatever influences lead the Sunday school teacher to become obsessed with the idea of Bible competitive examinations and merit lists are directly antagonistic to his work as a teacher of religion. The real and indeed the only purpose of questioning in Sunday school teaching and in religious teaching generally ought to be to lead pupils to acquire religious knowledge that will act as a motive and guide to righteous action. Examination questions that encourage the "getting up" of trivial and unessential Bible facts—the dimensions of the various parts of Solomon's temple, for example—are the bane of true religious education. In employing testing questions the teacher or examiner should make it his ideal to confine them to facts that have some direct or indirect religious significance, and questions set to test the pupils' knowledge of such facts should be supplemented by other—and they are the more important—questions that will test their knowledge of the significance of the

facts. Thus a pupil should be asked to explain not only the arrangement of the courts of the Tabernacle or of the Temple—into outer, inner, and Holy of Holies—but also the religious significance of this arrangement. To the Jews the arrangement was expressive of the mystery, awe, and holiness attaching to Jehovah; and pupils who grasp this idea are certainly helped towards that reverential attitude of mind which permeates the true religious life.

The general aim of a *training* question is obvious. In introducing a new lesson the teacher asks a few questions to rouse in the pupils' minds the already existent ideas that have some connection with the new ideas to be presented. Such questions are certainly testing questions, but they are more: they are indispensable for the systematic teaching and learning of the new ideas—they belong to the training process in the preparation stage of a lesson. Again, in the course of a lesson, questions have to be put which will compel the pupils to think out connections between one point of the lesson and another. Through such questions both the lesson and the pupils' thinking out of the lesson are developed. Again at the close of the lesson, or possibly at the end of each section of the lesson, the teacher may revise or recapitulate by means of questions which not only test the pupils' knowledge of the lesson, but help to fix the knowledge more firmly in their minds. All such revisal questions train or habituate the mind to retain acquired knowledge and to recollect it on the necessary occasion. Examples of training questions will be found, in their natural context, in the early part of Chapter IV of this book, also in Chapters VI and IX.

The teacher may have a perfectly clear and worthy purpose in putting a question, and yet may express it

in such a way as to defeat his aim. No catalogue of the various forms of "bad" questioning can exhaust the possible number of faulty ways in which a teacher is liable to express his questions. He should be specially on his guard against three kinds of "bad" questions. The experienced and sympathetic teacher, looking at the replies which his pupils give to his questions, has often to pull himself up as it were and ask himself, Is my question confusing and misleading the pupils? Is it encouraging random guessing? Is it virtually suggesting the answer? If a question comes under any one of these three classes, it tends to produce not only a bad intellectual result *but a bad moral result.*

As an example of the misleading type of question take the following: A Sunday school teacher about to give a lesson on John the Baptist, and with the idea of rousing interest in what is coming, asks the indefinite question, "Who was living before Jesus was born?" At once come the answers Moses, Jacob, Joseph, Solomon—all correct answers, but not the one which is necessary to start the lesson on John the Baptist. The indefinite form of the question has led the pupils' thoughts wandering over a wide range of possible answers and away from the one answer which has to do with the lesson. It has called up in the pupils' minds ideas unrelated to the lesson and is thus a bad kind of Preparation step. The result is confusion of thought, and waste of mental energy and of time. Those who have to do with the training of teachers can testify how much class discipline suffers through such questioning. Contrast the above question with this one: Name any individual in the Bible who foretold the coming of Jesus. This question also brings forth various answers—David, the prophets, etc., but the answers all bear upon one definite idea—the prophecy

of Christ's birth ; and although the lesson is to be on one particular prophet, the Baptist, it is desirable at the outset of the lesson to recall the names of the others and to associate them with the new prophet of the lesson.

In teaching there is a place for intelligent guessing, but questions which encourage the pupils to make random shots at an answer have a distinctly bad moral effect. Careful, intelligent, and honest thinking is as necessary in the sphere of morals and religion as in that of science, and questions which invite pupils to shirk such thinking should be avoided. Thus a question that presents two alternative answers only one of which is right, is a strong temptation to children to make a random choice. The question " Was Jesus born before the time of Julius Cæsar or after ? " is a direct incitement to a certain type of mind to say " before " or " after " according to their fancy. The question once put by a teacher " Was Paul a disciple or an apostle ? " was intended to bring out the fact that Paul was not one of the twelve disciples. The result was what might have been expected : random guessing on the part of those who were not sure of the meanings of " disciple " and " apostle," but who presumed, from the form of the question, that one of two answers must be right ; and hasty and random guessing even on the part of those who could have named the twelve disciples but who did not take the trouble to think of these. In the interests of both classes of answerers the teacher who becomes aware of his having put such a " bad " question should follow it up by another question that will compel the answerers to justify their answer. They may do this by being asked to name the twelve disciples, or by showing that Jesus had been crucified before Paul was converted. In any case they must be led to realise

that careful, honest thinking is as important as honest action. A not uncommon form of question that presents two alternative answers to the child is "Was A a good man or a bad man." To give a just answer to such a question demands a careful weighing of the good and of the bad in the man's life, and if the teacher puts such a question he should not be satisfied with the answer "good" or the answer "bad." He himself we presume will have arrived at a well reasoned and just judgment; but he should not assume that a pupil's answer to the question is equally well reasoned and just. The child is very prone to judge from a single striking instance of goodness or badness as to the character of the individual, or—which is worse—to accept the teacher's judgment. Only after a careful review of the individual's many actions is the above question in place, and children should be gradually trained to realise this. It is a training in well-balanced and charitable judgment, and such judgment is one of the most essential and beautiful features of the religious life.

Questions which suggest or virtually contain their own answer are evidently unproductive of *independent* thinking on the part of the pupils. The question "Wasn't Job a very patient man?", addressed to a class of young children who know next to nothing about Job, will almost invariably call forth an affirmative response. The force of the suggested answer is very strong, more especially when this is increased by the teacher's tone, inflection, or emphasis of voice. The tendency to employ such a form of question is most prevalent amongst teachers of young children. One reason may be that the question seems more kindly and less exacting than the direct form of question. It is mistaken kindness, however, to use it habitually. The teacher who does so may secure ready

responses, but they are the responses of unthinking minds that are half hypnotised by the suggesting mind of the teacher. Questions that do not involve some independent effort in the answering fail to develop a respect for knowledge and truth: and a respect for truth should be one important result of religious training.

The art of questioning is so bound up not only with good teaching but with good class management and discipline that we must here state three important rules that are frequently forgotten.

First, questions should be first addressed to the class as a whole, and for the very sound reason that all the pupils are expected to think out the answers, though only one or two will actually be called on to express the answer. Thereby the attention of the whole class is kept to the development of the lesson from point to point; and where there is this class attention there is good class order and discipline.

Second, questions should not be needlessly repeated. A question that is repeated for the benefit of an inattentive pupil is a direct encouragement to him to continue in his attitude. The teacher who lets his pupils feel that his questions or his commands are to be given once and for all, exercises a fine toning up influence on his pupils' mental and moral alertness.

Third, questions should be well distributed over the whole class and not confined to a few pupils—generally those who are readiest to answer. It is the teacher's duty to stimulate the more ignorant or it may be the more retiring and less assertive members of his class to answer; and this both in their own interests and in the interests of general class discipline.

In the best kind of teaching the relation between teacher and pupil is not always that of questioner and answerer. It is not so in a sympathetic home where

the reversal of the rôles contributes so much to the child's intellectual development; and although the conditions of home and of school instruction are somewhat different, the child's innate desire to ask questions should not be suddenly discouraged the moment he enters the schoolroom. Awkward and even unanswerable as are many children's questions on religious matters, a wise parent will try to make some response, and a wise Sunday school teacher might well follow suit. Besides, a child's questions are often of considerable help to a teacher in revealing the child's mental standpoint and in thus partly guiding the teacher as to the line of instruction to be followed. Whether the pupils will readily ask questions or not will depend very much on the sympathetic relationship between them and their teacher. Some pupils will ask questions quite spontaneously, others need to be encouraged. Questions which are irrelevant to the subject of the lesson or that do not in any way help the development of the lesson, must be quietly and firmly set aside. Care must be taken, however, in deciding what is irrelevant. A pupil, in the course of a lesson on Peter's vision at Joppa, asked the teacher how it was that Peter whilst sleeping on the housetop did not fall off. The explanation that the roofs of Eastern houses were flat did nothing to elucidate the vision and its religious lesson. Yet the question showed that one pupil at least—there may have been more—was puzzling over a difficulty which if left unsolved might have diverted his attention from the more essential parts of the lesson. The difficulty, though not an essential point in the lesson, is connected with the lesson; and the satisfying of the pupil's interest in the difficulty may be the means of carrying forward his attention and interest to the rest of the lesson proper. This indirect

way of securing interest in a lesson has frequently to be adopted by the teacher. As to those profound and unanswerable questions which a child often puts, the wise and only course for the teacher is to confess ignorance. But the confession can be made in such a humble and reverential spirit that the child's natural religious sense is thereby deepened, not deadened. To the not uncommon child's question, "But who made God?" we can only answer in the spirit of the first chapter of Genesis, "God made all." It is the only answer, but the answer which, when duly impressed in youth, and remembered in the midst of life, makes for true religion.

If it is essential that the teacher should be able to question his pupils methodically and skilfully, it is equally essential that he should be able to deal aright with his pupils' answers. Indeed it is the pupils' answers that partly determine the questions of a good teacher. And in this way. In teaching a lesson certain pivotal questions, as they may be called, must be asked: they are the questions whose answers constitute the essential ideas in the lesson. But outside these leading questions other questions have to be put which will gradually lead the pupils from their own imperfect or wrong ideas, as revealed in their answers, to the right ideas that will enable them to answer the leading questions. These subsidiary questions, from the point of view of real teaching, are the most important questions—they are what we previously called the training questions. In most cases a pupil has some reason or other for an erroneous answer. The teacher must try to get at this reason and thus to discover the ideas in the pupils' minds which gave rise to the answer. Knowing these ideas the teacher can then modify them in such a way as to produce a new

combination of ideas that will lead the pupil to think out the right answer.[1] The teacher who deals with answers in this way is the truly sympathetic teacher. He *thinks with* his pupils—the indispensable preliminary to *feeling with* them. Such an intellectual sympathy with the child exerts a strong and beneficent influence not only on his intellectual but on his emotional development. Further, children appreciate the effort of a teacher to understand them, and the resulting wave of sympathy that passes from them to the teacher passes also to the subject matter of the teaching.

Three kinds of answers have to be dealt with—right, wrong, partly right and partly wrong. The right answer, when it is a simple choice between two alternatives presented by the form of the question, may be wrongly dealt with, as we have already seen, if it is not followed up by asking the pupil to justify his answer. Again in questions that call for opinions and judgments the teacher should not pass on the moment he receives an answer corresponding to his own opinion. The answer is right, certainly, from his point of view; but as the whole class is expected to think out the answer it is desirable to get the opinion of several pupils as representative of the class. A sympathetic discussion of these opinions, if they happen to be conflicting, often helps the teacher to prove and emphasise the value of his own matured judgment. The plan, when used with discretion, contributes to the general attention and interest of a class.

We have already indicated how a wrong answer due to ignorance should be dealt with. When the teacher is sure that an answer is due to carelessness in thinking, the pupil must simply be required to "think again."

[1] For a full and lucid psychological treatment of this point the teacher is referred to Professor Adams's *Primer on Teaching*, Chap. II, "Ideas, and their Relations."

But what teachers are sometimes prone to call stupid or silly answers are not always due to careless thinking. A moment's reflection on the answer, or a little kindly probing of the pupil, may prove that the answer is a right inference from the combination of ideas in the pupil's mind. This frequently happens when the teacher is thinking of the spiritual and the pupil of the material aspect of a thing. A teacher who had been trying to impress upon her pupils that those who loved Jesus would go to heaven and receive rewards and golden crowns, put the question, " Now, who do you think will receive the biggest crown ? " An answer was long in coming. At last came the response from one little chap, " 'Im wot's got the biggest 'ead." Quite a thoughtful and correct answer from the pupil's material point of view. In this case the child's natural tendency to think of the material aspect of the world was accentuated by the teacher's picture of material rewards.

In the case of the answer which is partly right and partly wrong, it is most important that the pupil should get full credit for the " right " part. The experienced teacher knows what an incentive this is to the pupil in learning the right answer.

In order to deal with answers in the spirit of the above suggestions the teaching must be deliberate, even whilst it is enthusiastic and fervid. The teacher who is both fervid and sympathetic needs no such advice : he is rather tempted to spend undue time over single answers to the detriment of the lesson as a whole. Still, there are occasions when such a teacher feels that whilst the lesson may have suffered the class has gained. True, he may not be preparing his pupils so well to meet the demands of prescribed schemes of work and examinations ; but " that is another story."

CHAPTER VIII

ILLUSTRATION IN RELIGIOUS TEACHING

Of the various devices employed in teaching perhaps none requires more careful handling than Illustration. This seems specially true in the teaching of religious truth and practice.

The term "illustrate," as its Latin origin indicates, means to throw light upon something so as to make it clearer. In presenting new ideas to pupils we illustrate or make them clearer by bringing them into connection with some other idea or ideas more familiar to the pupils. These familiar ideas, by their kinship to the new ideas, throw light upon the new ideas and make them more easily understood by the learner. Thus the verbal description of the various journeys of St. Paul will raise certain mental pictures in the pupils' minds; but these may be very indistinct and confused. Now as the spatial and visible representation of these journeys on a map is more easily followed than the verbal description, the map or pictorial representation will throw light upon and make clearer the verbal representation. The map is thus a *material* intermediary agency or illustration that makes clearer the new ideas originally produced by words. Again, suppose we are dealing with general truths such as "The wages of sin is death," or general precepts such as "Love your neighbour as yourself," we can make these more meaningful and real by stories illustrative of their application in life. In this case we use *verbal*

illustration. Broadly speaking we may class all kinds of illustrations as either *material* or *verbal.*

In using any kind of illustration the teacher will do well to ask himself two questions—first, what exactly do I want to illustrate? Second, Is my illustration really making the *illustrandum*,[1] or thing to be illustrated, clearer? The point and value of these questions will perhaps emerge in our discussion of the use and limitations of some types of illustration. We shall begin with *material* illustrations. These include :—

1. The actual objects themselves as perceived by the senses.
2. Models.
3. Pictures, photographs, etc.
4. Diagrammatic representations—maps, graphs, etc.

First, the object itself as illustration. As first-hand acquaintance with an object is better than second- or third-hand acquaintance, the object itself is its own best illustration. An actual cathedral is the best illustration of a cathedral. But in so far as we see it only as a great building of a certain form and structure and nothing more, the illustration is incomplete. If we go inside and our feelings of solemnity and reverence are stirred within us at the thought of our being within walls hallowed by the devotions of past generations, we are seeing more of the cathedral : we are perceiving its spiritual as well as its material aspects. In this case the object itself is becoming more illustrative of the meaning and significance of a cathedral. But these unseen and spiritual aspects of the object called " cathedral " are disclosed to us, not by the building itself, but by what it suggests. An actual cathedral is the best illustration of " cathedral " only to him who

[1] Professor Adams's term. See his *Exposition and Illustration in Teaching*, p. 18.

can see in it more than catches the outer eye.[1] Similarly the actual Mount of Olives and the Garden of Gethsemane may give us the clearest ideas of these places *as places;* but to the tourist merely bent on "sight-seeing" they may convey less clear ideas of their religious significance than can be conveyed to a little child through a simple story. When the teacher therefore appeals to his pupils' first-hand knowledge of things as illustration of those things, he has to ask himself what he wishes to illustrate—the object itself as it appears to the outer senses, or the inner meaning and significance of the object. When he tells his pupils that the Jewish temple was something like a church he certainly makes the idea of temple a little clearer; but from the point of view of true spiritual training he must lead his pupils' minds from the merely outward similarities to the inner and spiritual resemblances. Unless he does this, his illustration fails to make clearer and more impressive that spiritual meaning of temple which is the essential meaning that concerns religious thought and feeling. To illustrate the meaning of "altar," it is not enough for the Sunday school teacher to point his pupils to the altars to be found in churches. To many children belonging to Protestant Churches altars are little more than places for putting "the money" or "flowers" on! If the teacher wishes to illustrate or make clearer the idea of an altar so as to make this idea contribute to the development of religious thought and feeling, he must lead his pupils to understand the spiritual significance of what they call "the money" and "the flowers." Similarly, mere gazing at the actual starry heavens themselves does not make their spiritual meaning clearer. They are more than a vast expanse

[1] See Thring's *Theory and Practice of Teaching*, p. 47.

of dark blue dotted with innumerable points of light. They are more than an infinite number of worlds moving through infinite space. The religious teacher must stimulate his pupils to look upon them with something of the spirit of the Psalmist when he said, "The heavens declare God's glory and the firmament sheweth forth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night teacheth knowledge of Thee." When, therefore, the teacher wishes to illustrate the meaning of some visible and tangible object that has a bearing on the spiritual life of man, it may be said with perfect truth that the object does not illustrate the most important aspect of itself. Its spiritual significance needs to be explained *in language.* When the illustrandum is not a material object, but a conception such as honour, a definite example or instance of honourable action will certainly make the abstract idea more living and real. But here again some verbal explanation is required to enable children to see how the example comes under the class of honourable actions.

Second, Models as Illustrations

Models showing the broad features of an object are sometimes helpful in making a verbal description clearer. Pupils are often more interested in the models than in the actual objects, and if they can handle the models they learn more in this way about the form and structure of the real object. Their value as illustrations, however, is strictly limited, and not to be estimated in direct proportion to the pupils' interest in them. After all they are only models and cannot produce the feeling of reality which the thing itself does. A model of the temple at Jerusalem may give pupils a clearer idea of the form and appearance of the

temple than they get from a verbal description, but it does not give the idea of size and grandeur which may quite well be got from a verbal account, or from a good pictorial representation. "Noah's Arks" have been a source of delight and instruction to generations of children; but they have done less than nothing to illustrate the tragic grandeur of the old story of the Flood. For material illustrations that will impressively illustrate the Biblical account of the Flood we must turn to some of the great pictures. As Professor Adams says, "models can reproduce proportions but not sentiments,"[1] and in so far as models fail to reproduce sentiments they are of comparatively little use in religious education. A seeming exception may be found in the great value which Roman Catholics place upon the use of crucifixes and statuary. Now a windowful of small crucifixes, such as may be often seen near cathedrals and churches in Roman Catholic countries, is apt to rouse in the Protestant mind anything but reverential feelings. There is a seeming pettiness about the whole thing that is out of keeping with the feelings which we associate with the Crucifixion. But to the devout Roman Catholic there is no such pettiness, and the reason is that the crucifix is so associated with the impressive ceremonial of his Church that it takes on an impressiveness that does not belong to it as a mere model. It is the same with the statuary in churches. When this statuary is the work of great artists, the statuary itself has all the impressiveness of noble art; and when to this is added a beautiful material environment the æsthetic and the religious effects are all the greater. In so far as models of any kind help the worshipper to keep clearly before him the religious facts for which they stand, and to renew

[1] *Exposition and Illustration in Teaching*, p. 264.

the emotion associated with those facts, they are valuable illustrations. Protestantism has all along been opposed to "graven images." But there is nothing inherently objectionable in them any more than in the pictorial illustrations of stained glass windows, or the bread and wine consecrated in the Holy Communion. The illustration, of course, must truly represent and not misrepresent. The objection to the "golden calf" of the Israelites was not so much because it was an image, but because it imaged the wrong thing. It represented another god than the true God. It was an attempt to image that which cannot be imaged.

This is perhaps the most convenient place to refer to the practice of modelling in cardboard, sand, or clay which has been strongly advocated in some quarters as an activity that ought to be included in Sunday school work. It occupies an important place in the day school instruction, and is meant to train the pupils' observation, thought, and manual dexterity. Now whilst it may be very desirable to introduce a little more variety into the traditional methods of the Sunday school, it is very questionable if modelling is a proper activity for the Sunday school. The aim of the Sunday school is not to cultivate the observation of material objects nor to develop manual dexterity however interesting these may be. Nor even for the purpose of illustrating material objects is the activity justified. To set children, as one writer suggests, to make a sand model of the road between Jerusalem and Jericho as illustrative of the story of the Good Samaritan, may be a very interesting activity for them ; but it concentrates too much attention on what is after all unessential to the development of the point of the story. This development lies in the actions of

the priest, the Levite, and the Samaritan ; and children can be as much interested in the doings of those three people as in their own modelling activities. In view of the religious purpose of his work and the very limited time at his disposal, the Sunday school teacher cannot afford to dissipate the attention and energy of his pupils in modelling. Such modelling does not even indirectly make the lesson as a religious lesson any clearer ; on the contrary, it tends to confuse the issue. Further, the activity of modelling has little or no connection with the moral activities that the Sunday school should seek to stimulate through its instruction. The modelling of such objects as the Sinai peninsula, the Ark of the Israelites, or the Temple, will certainly develop a child's observation and manual skill ; but whether these powers are to become moral or immoral will depend on the purposes for which they may afterwards be employed. If the child's interest in modelling leads him to take a practical interest in the activities of worship, truth-telling, unselfish service, then modelling may be worthy of a place in the Sunday school course. It is to be feared, however, that the activity tends to become an end in itself, having no influence on the religious life of the pupil. One possible way of making the activity contribute directly towards the religious aim of the school is to rouse the pupils' desire to send the products of their industry in cardboard or in clay to cheer the lives of poor children in hospitals. In such a case the main aim of the activity is neither to illustrate things nor to train observation and skill, but to render Christ-like service—and there are numerous more expeditious and more valuable ways in which the children of a church can render this service than by making models.

Third, Pictures as Illustrations

Of material illustrations, pictures—whether paintings, engravings, or photographs—are the most common as they are the most available. In making clearer the outstanding scenes and incidents of the Bible and impressing religious sentiments and ideas on the minds of children, good artistic pictures can be of the greatest service. A good historical picture may present in a single and easily remembered view the principal elements of a long verbal description, besides adding clearness to some of the details in the description. Readers who are familiar with Holman Hunt's great picture, "The Finding of our Saviour in the Temple," will remember how clearly, impressively, and convincingly the artist brings the gospel story before us. Such a picture is highly illustrative not only of the most dramatic moment in the action of the story, but of details, such as dress, of which the Bible account says nothing. The picture is an excellent example of those pictures which aim at presenting an historical fact in a setting of details consistent with the time and place of the happening.

In using a picture *as an illustration* of some Bible incident the teacher should see that it conforms to certain conditions. In the first place, it is not enough that the picture should illustrate some of the things mentioned in the verbal account: it must illustrate the central idea of that account. Let us explain by taking an extreme case. A teacher introduces the picture of Jesus as the Good Shepherd in connection with a lesson on Christ's stilling of the tempest. He may think that some pictorial representation of Jesus is better than none at all, or he may wish to emphasise

the contrast between Jesus as the gentle shepherd of His people and Jesus as the Lord and Master of nature in its terrible phases. But on either supposition the introduction of the picture at this stage is risky. The picture is irrelevant to the lesson : it does not make clearer any *essential* point in the lesson. On the contrary, it tends to divert attention from the ideas of sea, storm, and Christ's action on the sea, to the other and quite different ideas of peaceful shepherding. The two sets of ideas jostle each other for ascendancy in the pupils' minds, and the impression of the lesson in hand is weakened and obscured by the irrelevant picture. The picture rightly belongs, as an illustration, to a lesson dealing with the idea of Jesus as the Good Shepherd. What am I seeking to illustrate ? the teacher must ask himself. It is not Jesus in the capacity of a shepherd, but Jesus as the Master of Nature. It is evident, therefore, that a picture to be illustrative of some Bible scene must throw light upon the scene : it must make the main idea or ideas of the scene clearer. The famous engravings which the French painter Gustav Doré made for what came to be known as the Doré Bible were an attempt to conform to the above condition. They were specific illustrations made by a painter who had sufficient poetic insight to catch the main idea and spirit of the Bible narratives, and to express them in a pictorial though somewhat fantastic form that appealed to British religious ways of thinking in the nineteenth century.

The pictures of Doré and of all the painters of the past who painted religious subjects suggest the second and perhaps the more important condition to which a picture, as illustrative of religious ideas, should conform. A religious picture may be a fair illustration of

some Biblical narrative as it presented itself to a past generation; it may not be so to a later generation. As religious ideas develop, religious art, as a form of expression of those ideas, must also develop. Thus whilst some of the greatest paintings of the past have represented God in a human form sitting in the clouds and presiding like a great Judge over the earth below, it is doubtful if any modern painter would so represent Him. Modern religious thought does not appreciate anthropomorphic representations of the Deity; these are contradictory of our conception of the infinitude and spirituality of Deity. We take our stand by Jesus Christ's saying, "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Again, no thoughtful Sunday school teacher to-day would ever think of using Doré's weird and fantastic representations of hell and the devil as illustrations. The teacher has therefore to consider what pictures will best represent the facts of the Bible as they are conceived and interpreted to-day. He should not seek to use *as illustrations* pictures that represent God as simply a great superman. There is no reason why we should render the child's anthropomorphic idea of God more definite than it is by pictorial illustrations. Those Old Testament narratives in which the writers represent God as communing with men, are not meant to be translated into definite visual images. Their very vagueness and elusiveness allow of the development of a more and more spiritual conception by the child. Some of the old illustrative prints that used to appear in our Bibles sometimes only too readily stamped themselves on the imaginations of the young. The impressions conveyed by such a print as "The Last Judgment" from Michelangelo's fresco have been such as to remain

with people all their lives and to obstruct the development of a more spiritual conception of Christ's awful words. On the other hand, the well-known print of Leonardo da Vinci's picture "The Last Supper" portrays the scene when Jesus said, "One of you shall betray Me," with such naturalness and pathos that it can be made a most impressive illustration for children of the Gospel account of Christ's last social intercourse with His disciples.

Previous to the rapid developments of modern photography which have been the means of providing us with cheap and excellent prints of many of the great pictures, good pictorial illustrations of religious subjects were difficult to be had. This and other reasons led educational publishers, German publishers in particular, to issue large pictorial cartoons illustrative of the Bible stories. These pictures, for the most part crude and inartistic, are still to be seen on the walls of not a few of our British schools. Their purpose was to illustrate Bible facts, not to cultivate the sense of beauty. Yet æsthetic emotion is not unallied to religion. As one writer says, "In bringing pupils into an appreciation of beauty, we are really bringing them into an acquaintanceship with the perfection of God as revealed in the works both of nature and of man."[1] Another writer—a practical schoolmaster—speaking of the claim of beauty in education concludes a fair and reasonable argument with the following: "The truth would seem to be that beauty and moral goodness, though not directly interdependent at any particular point, may yet be allied. . . . For art and morals, though not sisters, are cousins, and, as Plato seems to indicate in his Idea of the Good

[1] *The Psychological Principles of Education*, by Professor H. H. Horne, p. 337. See chaps. xxix and xxx.

(the common fountain of Goodness and Beauty and Knowledge) they have a single cause. He whose goodness is not superficial or conventional, but derived from the source of all goodness, will probably not err in his conception of the beautiful, and likewise the reverse. . . . Neither [art nor morals] can redeem the faults of the other, but both together form the best man."[1] That beauty has some kind of bearing on religion is practically admitted by all but extreme Puritans, and is evidenced in the increasing attention which is being paid to the artistic form and furnishing of our churches. As far as possible then the Sunday school teacher should use as pictorial illustrations only such pictures as are at once illustrative and artistic. This ideal is already successfully carried out in the illustrating of modern day school reading books.[2] Suitable pictures are to be found in the many book publications issued under such titles as *The Bible in Art*, *Christian Art*, etc. One such book well deserves a place in a Sunday school reference library. Although the plates even in the largest of these publications are not very suitable for exhibiting to large classes, they can be easily seen by or passed round amongst the small classes of which the Sunday school is generally composed. It is also desirable, however, to have loose photos and prints which can be easily passed round the class. Quite a goodly portfolio of these can soon be collected by a Sunday school staff who are alive to the value of good pictures in the work of religious education. The portfolio might well contain other than Biblical pictures. Many a picture that deals with the ordinary situations and incidents of life is essentially

[1] *The New Schoolmaster*, by "Fourth Form," pp. 233, etc.

[2] The productions of such publishers as Messrs. Blackie, Harrap, Nelson, may be cited as examples.

religious. Such a picture as Sir David Wilkie's "The Blind Fiddler" leads us to think new thoughts and feel new emotions about our brothers of mankind, and that art which deepens our love of mankind is truly religious. Again, Sir Edwin Landseer's pictures did much to spread the new gospel of sympathy with the animal world, and sympathy with God's creatures, be they lower or higher, is a necessary element in the religious life. To look at Landseer's picture "The Highland Shepherd's Chief Mourner"—which Ruskin regarded as a perfect poem as much as a perfect picture[1]—is to see something of the artist's vision of that hidden bond which unites lower and higher life in God's creation. The same kind of spiritual lesson is conveyed by H. H. La Thangue's "The Last Furrow," and J. C. Dollman's "The Top of the Hill," in both of which the horse is pathetically and nobly represented as partner in man's work and sorrow. It will depend on the teacher's own judgment as to when such pictures can be appropriately used to illustrate some Bible lesson, or to form by themselves the subjects of religious lessons. In using a picture either as illustration or as the core of a lesson, the teacher will have to guide his pupils' observation and interpretation of the picture. In every good picture there are principal and subordinate parts all artistically related to each other, and children need to be trained to see the relative importance and significance of the parts and so to appreciate the meaning of the picture as a whole. Loving observation and loving interpretation on the teacher's own part will help greatly towards this end.

In addition to those pictures which are presented to pupils as they are required, there should be some large-

[1] Ruskin's *Modern Painters* (Everyman's Library), vol. i, p. 8.

sized prints of standard examples of religious art permanently displayed on the Sunday school walls. We are thinking of the ideal kind of Sunday school building—that is yet to be—whose interior appearance is in fit keeping with the subject taught in it. It is a well-established fact that the material environment in which the study of a subject is carried on influences the learner's temper and disposition towards the subject. The bare and forbidding nature of the walls of many a Sunday school, on which neither the beauty and gentleness nor the vigour and power of the Christian life is reflected, is little calculated to produce pleasing associations with the instruction in that life. Hitherto our Churches have spent most of their care on the material environment of the adult worshipper, and little or none on that of the Sunday school child.

There is one type of pictorial cartoon that should not be admitted into our Sunday schools, and that is the cartoon of "the awful example." As we have urged in a previous chapter, virtue is better taught through the presentation of the good. It is even risky to present "the awful example" alongside of the good example: the suggestive force of the former is often far greater than that of the latter. There is a valuable lesson for the teacher in the explanation given by a boy who was charged at a London Children's Court with playing "pitch and toss" instead of going to school. He said he would not have thought of doing such a thing but for a picture called "The Progress of the Idle Apprentice" which, along with another picture called "The Progress of the Industrious Apprentice," had been hung in his bedroom with a view to his moral improvement. Normal healthy-minded children resent pictures—as they resent stories—that too obviously preach at them through contrasts like the

above which they rightly suspect as somewhat unfair. As a rule prints that are got up specially to teach morals are thoroughly inartistic, and either leave children quite "cold" or help to make them moral prigs.

After making due allowance for the value of material illustrations in religious education, it is evident that for illustrations of those moral and religious ideas and their cognate activities which it is the supreme business of the Sunday school to teach, the teacher must depend largely and ultimately on *verbal illustrations.* The spiritual meaning of the Ark of the covenant is not made clear either by actually seeing it (were that possible) or by looking at a model or picture of it. To bring out this meaning the teacher will have to use language that will call up in his pupils' minds such ideas as covenanting between God and man, God's protection, etc. Such ideas can only be illustrated by pointing pupils to their own home experiences of faithful promising and father's care and protection, or by means of stories illustrative of the ideas connected with covenanting.

In using verbal illustrations, however, the teacher must see that the words really stand for and call up in the pupils' minds ideas of things, situations, and experiences already familiar to them. He will find out this by a question or two or even by a study of his pupils' faces. If his verbal illustration is not having the desired effect, he must try another. Of course he may ultimately fail to find any suitable illustration, and for the simple reason that his pupils are too young and inexperienced to have the necessary ideas. This is one reason why many of Christ's sayings cannot possibly be explained and illustrated to very young children. The explanation and illustration of such a

saying as "Ye must be born again" demand more experience and reflective power than are found in a young child. Even the adult Nicodemus, who was doubtless representative of the vast majority of his countrymen, had difficulty in understanding the statement. It was the same with nearly all Christ's statements. Failure to understand Him was due to the difficulty in translating the literal meaning of His words into the spiritual meaning which He wished to convey. The difficulty is still with us and particularly so in teaching children. It lies in the *form* of the illustration which Christ used and which is very largely used throughout the Bible. In using this *form* we are said to be reasoning by *analogy*. The meaning and force of this illustration by analogy will be brought out in the next chapter in connection with the method of teaching the parables.

CHAPTER IX

THE TREATMENT OF THE PARABLES IN RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

THE definition of Christ's parables as earthly stories with heavenly meanings does not by itself help the teacher very much in making Christ's parables a means of religious education. Indeed the definition may be positively misleading, unless we are clear in our own minds as to what aspect of the earthly story has the heavenly meaning. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, the earthly details about the husks of the swine, the hired servants, and the fatted calf are comparable to nothing in the heavenly sphere; they are employed by Jesus to give atmosphere to the story, they are meant to strike the imagination of His hearers and through association to impress on the memory the spiritual significance of the story. The heavenly meaning that Jesus intended to convey by the story was the *relationship* between God and His sinful and penitent creatures. Just as an earthly father acts towards a prodigal and penitent son, so God acts towards His penitent creatures. There are four main ideas or as we may say four terms—father and son in the story, and God and penitent man implied in the story. A comparison is made between the relationship of the first two terms and the relationship of the second two terms.[1] The relationship between the first two terms is equal to the relationship between the second two terms. Or, which is the same thing, the relationship between the second two terms (God and

[1] This is the form of reasoning referred to on p. 97 as *analogy*.

man) is similar to the relationship between the first two terms (father and son). In teaching a parable the four terms must be clearly set forth. The blackboard is very helpful in this. In the case of some of the parables the four terms are not very obvious, and the teacher will require all the guidance he can get from some of the standard Bible commentaries. In the parable of the Seed growing secretly—the only parable peculiar to St. Mark—the two expressed terms are the man and the seed. There is doubt as to the other two terms understood. The teacher has to ask himself, "Does the sower correspond to the Lord himself?" The reference in the parable to the sower sleeping and rising night and day would seem to be at variance with this interpretation, and so we are led to reason that the sower represents the human ministry that God employs from age to age to forward His Kingdom, whilst the seed represents the teaching and preaching of that ministry. Thus the relationship between the agricultural sower and the mysterious growth of the seed which he puts into the ground, is similar to the relationship between God's preachers and teachers and the mysterious growth of the spiritual truth and life amongst their hearers. Children do not readily grasp the hidden relationships of things. Yet if they are to be taught Christ's parables *as parables*, the teacher must strive to present a clear statement of the *relationships* involved in the parables. Certainly a clear and interesting presentation of the parable story will help the teacher to rouse an interest in the spiritual interpretation. But this presentation must not lay stress on the merely informative details in the story. Even when a parable is only told as a story—as it will be to very young children—the subtle emotional effect may be lost amidst a welter of detailed explana-

tions. Not a few teachers, both in the schoolroom and in the pulpit, have robbed the story of Jesus the Good Shepherd of its charm and effect by misdirected attention to all the details of shepherd life—the crook, the dogs, sheep-pens, and such-like. If the telling of the story does not leave on the child's mind a picture of Jesus as the good, gentle, watchful protector of children, the lesson from the religious point of view must be counted a failure. The necessity of avoiding distracting detail and of emphasising the essential point of a parable is well illustrated in the case of a boy of eleven years of age who was brought before a Children's Court charged with sleeping out. Questioned as to the reason for his conduct he said he got the idea of leaving home, spending the contents of his money box on ginger-beer and chocolates, and then taking shelter in a pigsty, from the parable of the Prodigal Son which he had been taught in the Sunday school! Of course, even the most skilful teaching is frequently of no avail against the natural tendency of a boy to regard the prodigal as the hero of the story and to play his part.

As several of Christ's parables involve ideas and life relationships that are without the experience of young children, the teacher cannot hope to convey a spiritual interpretation of those parables. It is questionable if these parables should be taught even as stories. They should be left for study in the Bible class or in the latest stage of Sunday school instruction. The question then as to the *order* in which we should teach the parables is an important one. If we set out to teach them in the order of their narration in the Gospels we should have to teach some of the most difficult ones first. Now there are certain advantages in studying the parables in their chronological order—but this for the adult more than for the child. In the case of the

child we must adopt an order suitable to his growing powers of understanding and feeling. This means that we must begin with those parables that appeal to the simplest, best known, and most readily understood ideas and emotions. Only in this way can the teacher hope to rouse an interest which will grow and extend into Bible class and other adult study of the parables. Even amongst experienced teachers of children there would be considerable disparity of opinion as to the best order. The following scheme is intended as a suggestion of how to arrive at some decision in the matter :—

The Parable.	Illustrative of	
I		
The Good Samaritan	Helpful love.	The spiritual interpretation of this group involves ideas that are within the range of children's experience.
The Unmerciful Servant.	The Golden Rule.	
The Lost Sheep	How God loves us.	
The Lost Coin	How God loves us.	
The Prodigal Son	Penitence and God's forgiving love.	
The Entrusted Talents	Faithfulness to our trust.	
The Servants and the Pounds	Faithfulness to our trust.	
II		
The Sower and the Seed.	What hinders us from being and doing good.	The spiritual interpretation of this group involves ideas of what is not so easily seen and understood, e.g. that spiritual goodness is a better possession than mere material good.
The Tares	What hinders us from being and doing good.	
The Mustard Seed	The growth of the Kingdom of Heaven.	
The Leaven	The growth of the Kingdom of Heaven.	
The Hidden Treasure	The preciousness of the Kingdom of Heaven.	
The Pearl	The preciousness of the Kingdom of Heaven.	

Another and equally important question is, How shall we introduce children to the study of the parables? To express the question in the technical terms used in some of the preceding chapters, what general Preparation can the teacher make so as to ensure a more successful Presentation of the several parables? All Christ's parables were intended to describe the various aspects and characteristics of the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus assumed that His hearers knew what is meant by an earthly kingdom. Further, He never told them that the Kingdom of Heaven *is* such and such, but that it is *like* such and such; and when He said it was like such and such He meant that one of its characteristics was similar to a characteristic to be found in an earthly kingdom. In time therefore those people who heard Him expound one characteristic after another would come to have a clearer and larger idea of what the Kingdom of Heaven is. They would come to recognise that it is not to be found in any one special place on or beyond the earth, but that it is a spiritual kingdom—a kingdom irrespective of place and time—of all whose spirits acknowledge allegiance to the King of kings and who, whilst conforming to the laws of their earthly kingdom, strive also to conform to those of the heavenly kingdom. Such people would then understand Christ when He said "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you," or "The Kingdom of Heaven is not meat and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." But whilst in time Christ's parables would help His hearers to understand the Kingdom of Heaven as essentially a spiritual kingdom, conversely, those who grasped the idea of a spiritual kingdom of heaven would be thereby enabled to understand the parables better. The question therefore presents itself to the

teacher, Can I do anything to give children a preliminary idea of this spiritual heaven so as to help them towards a better understanding of the parables? To try to develop such an idea would be in accordance with all we know about the way our knowledge of anything begins and grows. We first get an idea of the thing as a whole, be it an apple or a kingdom. The idea of the thing may be very vague, but it undoubtedly helps us to take more particular interest in the thing and its parts and so to know the thing better. The following then is a suggested line of teaching by which the teacher might introduce his pupils to the study of Christ's parables.

The Kingdom of Heaven or the Kingdom of God

I. Get pupils to notice how frequently Jesus speaks of the Kingdom of Heaven or the Kingdom of God. What is a kingdom? What is the Kingdom of Heaven? Where is it? Such like questions addressed to the pupils will bring out various and in the case of young children very peculiar answers. To the third question not an uncommon answer is "Above the sky." (It is a far cry from this notion to Christ's conception, yet the religious teacher must do something to help his pupils to advance gradually from the one to the other.) Well, we shall by and by see what Christ meant. He tried to explain to His hearers and to us what the Kingdom of Heaven really is and where it is, in some thirty-six stories. You will understand some of the stories much better if you first understand the meaning of kingdom. Then this will help you to understand what Jesus meant by the Kingdom of Heaven.

II. What then is a kingdom? (This is the pivotal question round which the development of the lesson

must centre. In the teacher's mind the question should assume this form, What is the fundamental and essential characteristic of a kingdom ? and the answer should be clear in his own mind from the start if he is to lead his pupils towards the answer. The following then is a possible development of the lesson from this point.)

1. A kingdom is a land where there is a king. Yes. Name any kingdom you know. Great Britain, France, Germany (with certain classes it is advisable to disregard the difference between king, emperor, etc.).

2. But do land and a king make a kingdom ? No, there must be people. Yes, and something more, as we shall see presently.

3. What does the king do in a kingdom ? He rules, reigns over his people. Meaning of this ? In dealing with young children it is sufficient to explain that the king makes laws and rules to show what things his people must do, and what things they must not do, if they are to be happy. These are the king's laws.

4. Are these laws the same for everybody ? Yes—in a good kingdom. Why ? Because it would not be fair if one person were punished for disobeying a certain law and another person not. Then to make up a kingdom there must be what ? A king—a land—people—and laws which everybody must obey.

5. There is something more, however, to notice about a kingdom. A kingdom may be made up of more than one land. The King of Great Britain is king over a great many different lands on the earth, and different kinds of people. For example, Englishmen, Scotsmen, Canadians, etc. etc. Hence we can think of all the people in those different lands making up one kingdom because they are ruled by the same king.

(This may be further explained and illustrated by reference to such organisations as the Boy Scouts or the Boys' Brigade). Boy Scouts are to be found in nearly every land. So, in talking of the Boy Scout Kingdom we do not so much think of the different lands where Boy Scouts are, we rather think of all the Boy Scouts throughout the world obeying the good and useful laws of their Chief Scoutmaster—the King of the Scout Kingdom.

III. Now, let us imagine that all the various peoples in the world were under one king and obeyed the laws of the one king, then they would all form—just like the Scouts—one huge kingdom. And if they all obeyed the laws which God wishes us to obey, then what name might we give to this great kingdom? God's Kingdom or the Kingdom of God. To make this point more definite the teacher will ask pupils to state some of God's laws, for example, we must tell the truth always, we must love one another, help one another, etc. etc. These and other laws are the laws of what kingdom again? The Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of Heaven. Where then may this Kingdom of God or this Kingdom of Heaven be? All over the earth. But is it? No. Why not? Because all people do not obey God's laws. Do any people obey them? Yes. Then is the Kingdom of God not on the earth? Partly. If all the people on the earth obeyed God's laws or, which is the same thing, acted towards God and towards each other as Jesus showed how, would that be the Kingdom of God? Yes. Can you and I then be in the Kingdom of God whilst we are living on the earth? Yes. How? If we obey God's laws. Then we can help to make the Kingdom of Heaven here on earth. This train of thought can be continued, with older pupils, by enlarging the concep-

tion of the kingdom so as to bring within it the spiritual lives of the past and of the future, all working as one great brotherhood under the laws of love and service. It should be pointed out to those pupils that the beginning or foundation of such a Kingdom of Heaven can be traced in every community. However much one may dislike the detached attitude towards the present European struggle of the author of *Above the Battle*, Romain Rolland's noble conception of such a coming Kingdom of Heaven is worth impressing on the youth of our land. " For the finer spirits of Europe there are two dwelling-places : our earthly fatherland, and that other city of God. Of the one we are the guests, of the other the builders. To the one let us give our lives and our faithful hearts ; but neither family, friend, nor fatherland, nor aught that we love, has power over the spirit. The spirit is the light. It is our duty to lift it above tempests, and thrust aside the clouds which threaten to obscure it ; to build higher and stronger, dominating the injustice and hatred of nations, the walls of that city wherein the souls of the whole world may assemble."[1]

The conception of the Kingdom of God as a great family or brotherhood of people united to God and to each other in the bonds of love and service, needs to be recalled to pupils' minds again and again in the course of religious lessons, and especially in teaching the parables. Without this conception no parable can be adequately explained : it is, as we have already suggested, the *general preparation step* of a lesson on any one of the parables. Without the conception, indeed, Christ and Christianity are meaningless terms.

The transition from such a lesson as we have sketched above to the study of a parable may be

[1] *Above the Battle*, p. 54. Trans. by C. K. Ogden, M.A.

made quite simply as follows: How then does the King act towards His people? How are we expected to act towards God the King and towards one another? What are the laws of God's Kingdom? One very important law is pointed out by Jesus in the lesson we are to study to-day. The following treatment is suggested for a class of pupils from twelve to fourteen years of age:—

Parable of the Good Samaritan

Preparation Step.

(General.) Lesson, as previously taught, on the conception "Kingdom of God."

(Special.) Reading and discussion of Luke 10. 25–29 in order to know the circumstances which led Jesus to speak the parable and which help to explain the parable. A blackboard summary of the dialogue should be helpful—thus:—

Scribe: "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"
Jesus: "What does your own Jewish law say?"
Scribe: "Thou shalt love (1) the Lord thy God, etc., and (2) thy neighbour as thyself."
Jesus: "This do, and thou shalt live (as a worthy citizen of the Kingdom of God)."
Scribe: "*But who is my neighbour?*"

Why did the scribe ask particularly about the second part of the law? Because he wished to justify himself. But what does the word 'justify' mean? To show or put oneself in the right. Did Jesus's answer, "This do and thou shalt live," accuse the scribe of not having loved his neighbour? No. Why then did the scribe seek to justify himself by asking who was his

neighbour? Probably he felt that he had not always acted rightly towards the people with whom he came in contact. But if he felt this to be the truth, how did his question "But who is my neighbour?" excuse or justify him? Possibly he meant that it was difficult in life to know where to draw the line between those neighbours whom we are to help and those whom we are not to help. The class will agree with the teacher that the scribe's excuse or justification is a very common one, and that we are all ready on occasion to offer the same kind of excuse for inaction. Did Jesus, then, show the scribe who was and who was not his neighbour? We shall see.

Presentation.

The parable itself as giving Jesus's answer. Whether the parable is read straight through at first or not, the discussion falls into three clearly marked stages.

1. *How the priest acted* towards the wounded Jewish traveller. The main attention of the class must be riveted on the *action* of the priest, described in the simple and expressive Bible language, "he passed by on the other side." Possibly, let us imagine, he actually passed over to avoid coming near the wounded Jew. Who crossed over? the teacher repeats. The priest. A priest! would you have expected that? No. Would the wounded Jew have expected it? Why not? Here then was a man consecrated to the service of God and of his fellow-men—one who would surely go to the help of one of his own countrymen. But no—what did he do? He passed by on the other side. A strange contradiction between his profession as a priest and his actual practice on this occasion at least! Any possible reason for his failing to help? . . . Let us think, boys, of our own ways of doing some-

times. . . . Oh, he might think it was too much trouble to help the Jew—it might cost him some expense—he had not time—etc. etc. Yes, the fact of the matter is, he was thinking more of himself and his own interests than of the helpless Jew. Did he pity the man? Probably he had some small feeling of pity. Was the pity of any value to the helpless Jew? No. None whatsoever. He was near or nigh to a helpless human being and yet failed to be neighbourly in his actions. It is so easy for us to *feel* pity and to be neighbourly in this sense. But the question we have to put to ourselves is this, "Am I neighbourly in showing my pity in *action?*"

2. *How the Levite acted.* What was the Levite's profession? Hence what would be expected of him in the circumstances?—If one member of the priesthood failed to help, surely a second would not also neglect his duty. Alas! What did he do? He "came and looked on him and passed by on the other side." Why? Possibly for the same kind of reasons as the priest had. Did the Levite feel pity? Yes, probably more pity than the priest felt, for "he came and looked on him." Was this pity of any more practical use than the priest's? No. The Levite was no more neighbourly in *deed* than the priest was.

3. *How the Samaritan acted.* Who were the Samaritans? The relation between them and the Jews? Would the Jew have any reason to expect help from the Samaritan? No. Yet, strange to tell, he did get help. Class will note the special mention of compassion. Why this special mention? (The answer should follow from the discussion in parts 1 and 2 above.) Could the Samaritan have made the same excuses to himself as the priest and the Levite? Certainly. Yet he thought less of his own interests and more of the wounded

Jew's need of help. He was neighbourly in *deed*, and this even to a Jew.

Pupils should note the question Jesus put to the scribe, " Which of these three was neighbour to him that fell among the thieves ? " Suppose Jesus had not asked this question, what might the story have meant to the scribe ? That the wounded Jew was one class of neighbour who should be helped. Would the parable then have shown the scribe who were and who were not his neighbours ? No. When we look at Christ's question, who was the most important individual in the parable ? The Samaritan. Why did Jesus make the Samaritan the most important individual in the parable ? Because he wished the scribe to think less about " who were and who were not his neighbours," and more about his own conduct towards any and every individual he could help. Hence, boys, the question the scribe has to put to himself is not " *who* is my neighbour ? " but " Am *I* a neighbour or neighbourly ? " Did the Samaritan consider whether the Jew was his neighbour or not before helping him ? No. It was enough for the Samaritan—Jesus means to teach the scribe and us—that here was a human being in need of help and that it was his duty to help him. This, boys, is the general law for all of us, which Jesus teaches by means of the parable, and of which His own life was a supreme illustration. It is the law that will prevail when the whole earth becomes a Kingdom of God.

Examples of the actual application of the law in history should be adduced and associated together in the pupils' minds. The reason of this was shown in Chapters III and IV. The law may be exemplified in the actions of nations as well as of individuals. Thus pupils might be led to consider the cases where the

British people have helped small suffering nations irrespective of questions of self-interest, e.g. Armenians, Belgians, Serbians, etc. etc.

Examples may sometimes be found in the pupils' own more immediate environment and within their own personal knowledge. The story given at the end of Chapter VI is a fine illustration of the application of the truth embodied in the parable. Further, pupils should be asked to suggest possible applications by themselves, the following amongst others for example :—

1. Giving a money donation of their own to help some poor family suffering through father's illness or death, loss of home through fire, etc.
2. Visiting a sick companion in hospital and cheering him with flowers, fruit, or other welcome gift.
3. [To go further afield where entire strangers and even enemies are in need of help.] Giving contributions in money or in kind (articles of clothing, food, etc.) to foreign peoples suffering through war, pestilence, or famine.
4. The making of articles of clothing for those in need.

There are times like the present when the older girls in our Sunday schools could not be more religiously employed than in making such articles even during the Sunday school hour. To invite them to such work is to give them the chance of living the religious truth embodied in the story of the Good Samaritan.

In teaching the more complex and difficult parables, e.g. The Sower and the Seed, or the Entrusted Talents, a blackboard can be of great service in presenting to the eye the main points of the parable and their relationship. The following may suggest the kind of black-

board summary which should be developed alongside of a lesson to senior pupils on the parable of the Entrusted Talents.

The Parable.	*Its Spiritual Meaning.*
Owner, in a long absence, expects his servants to increase the value of his property.	Christ, leaving the earth, expects His followers to forward the interests of His Kingdom—the Kingdom of God.
The Entrusted Talents: so much capital to each servant according to his ability to use it profitably, thus :— A receives 5 talents. B „ 2 „ C „ 1 talent	Bodily powers—mental powers—wealth—friends—opportunities, etc., are unequally distributed amongst men; but even the possessor of the smallest endowment is required to use it aright (one law of the Kingdom of God).
How Used. A doubles his 5 talents. B „ „ 2 „	Representative of the faithful Disciples of Christ who use their respective powers with profit to the cause of righteousness.
C makes nothing of his one talent.	Representative of those who misconceive the character of the Master and lack the loving will to use such gifts as they have.
The Reward. A and B receive their Master's thanks and are given additional trust and responsibilities.	The Master's approval is given *equally* to His faithful workers. It is not so much the amount of work that counts as the *willing-*

C is deprived of his one talent and dismissed from his master's service.

ness and *faithfulness* with which it is done. (A law of the Kingdom of God.)

Disuse of a power or endowment in time renders the power useless. Neutral inaction of man is as opposed to the interests of the Kingdom as positive badness, and brings the same kind of punishment. (A law of the Kingdom of God.)

CHAPTER X

"LEARNING BY HEART" AS A MEANS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE committing to memory or "learning by heart" of certain portions of religious knowledge has long been regarded as an important part of religious instruction both in day school and Sunday school. This religious matter has included the answers in Church catechisms, metrical versions of the psalms, paraphrases, and Bible texts.

The general purpose of this exercise is (or ought to be) to ensure that the truths thus "learned by heart" shall be readily recalled and made operative in the conduct of the learner's life. Now if all the religious knowledge memorised by the children of our schools were really and truly learned by heart, little would need to be said about this question of memory work. Unfortunately the learning by heart often means nothing more than the memorising of so many meaningless words. Many an earnest teacher in the past has sought to justify this unintelligent memorising by some such argument as the following: "It is of the utmost importance that children should learn and remember certain religious truths. They have excellent memories. Why not therefore set them to learn by heart such things as catechisms, psalms, etc.? They may not understand what they learn by heart just now, but they will later on." Without entering into the question of the relative value of the child's and the adult's memory, it may be at once conceded that a

child does and easily learn by heart many things which ultimately come to be meaningful to him. The multiplication table, even when learned in the most unintelligent way, comes to have meaning for a child, but—and this is an important point—only when he sees its need and employment in practical life. Now the same happy result does not always follow his unintelligent memorising of religious knowledge, for neither the necessity nor the practice of religious truth is so obvious to him as the need and practice of the multiplication table. But even the multiplication table can be taught in such a way as to have some immediate meaning and interest to the child. Modern educational thought insists that a child develops best by living its own life of thought, feeling, and action; and that whatever he learns for the sake of that development must have some meaning and interest to him *as a child*. The premature teaching to children of meaningless knowledge produces some undesirable consequences. In too many cases the adult's lack of interest in the Bible and kindred literature is to be attributed to an early distaste engendered by meaningless memory tasks connected with it. In the interests of the true spiritual development of the child, therefore, we must abandon the traditional practice of making him memorise religious matter in the hope that he will understand it at a later stage. This general criticism bears specially against the traditional and, in Scotland, almost hallowed practice of learning the Shorter Catechism. There is an increasing recognition of the fact that both the content and the form of this catechism are not fitted to help the religious development of the young. The answers no doubt constitute a clear and powerful statement of the Calvinist interpretation of the Bible revelation; but it is a dogmatic and fixed

interpretation, and allows of no growth in religious ideas. Many of the answers, specially those dealing with the work of Redemption, are quite beyond the grasp of children. Even the attempt made in still shorter catechisms to make the ideas intelligible to children fails, and for the simple reason that the ideas however simply expressed are above the level of the child's experience. There are parts of the Shorter Catechism that are within a child's comprehension, but these must be taught him in an educative way. Now the question and answer form of a catechism—be it a political, scientific, or religious catechism—may be a method of imparting information; it is not a method of educating. It is purely a method of testing what is supposed to have been already intelligently taught and understood. Further, when a teacher wishes to test his pupils' religious knowledge, the catechism form of question is not the most suitable. This form, represented by such questions as "What is the chief end of man?" "What is God?" "What is effectual calling?" requires the child to *define* spiritual conceptions that are practically indefinable. If a child is taught to recognise God's doings in nature and amongst men, then the unanswerable question of the catechism "What is God?" should give place to the question "What does God do?" The answers to the latter question will be more meaningful, more interesting, and more helpful to the child than the answer of the Shorter Catechism. It is only through a slowly growing appreciation of God's *works* that the child comes to have an idea of what God *is*.

The learning of Bible texts can be made a real help in the development of the religious life. The young man, for example, who in beginning life remembers and understands such a text as "The fear of the Lord

is the beginning of wisdom" possesses at least one principle for guiding his ways aright. In the use of Bible texts several points need to be kept in mind. *Their selection should not be haphazard.* The once common practice of requiring children to learn texts as they appeared on the Sunday school cards awarded weekly for attendance, contributes little or nothing towards the religious aim of the school. The meaning of many a text is to be found only in its context. Christ's saying "One thing is needful and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her" is a memorable text, but it is only intelligible in light of the story of Christ's visit to the house of Lazarus. *An intelligent memorising of the text therefore implies that the learner must know something of the context.* If the necessary context happens to be the Reading Lesson for the day, so much the better: the study of the lesson then will, by association, be the means of impressing the text more firmly on the memory; and conversely, the remembrance of the text will be an aid to the recall of the whole lesson. *As a rule it is the Reading Lesson that should determine the choice of text.* This principle is now well observed in most Sunday school syllabuses of instruction. The text selected should be the one best fitted to keep the central truth of the lesson in mind. Thus no better texts can be found for impressing on the memory the lesson of Job's sublime faith in God in the midst of his afflictions than his own saying "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1. 21), or that other prophetic saying "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, etc." (Job 19. 25, 26). *The text also should have sufficient point and definiteness for children.* If the Reading Lesson itself does not contain such a text it must be sought for

elsewhere. In school syllabuses the Book of Psalms is largely drawn upon for illustrative texts; but frequently the texts chosen are of too general a character. Thus the text "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the House of the Lord" (Psalm 122. 1) prescribed in one syllabus in connection with a lesson on the founding of the temple (Ezra 3. 1–13) is not specific enough: it might be equally well applied to many other and even dissimilar occasions. If no sufficiently pointed text can be found, is there any necessity for prescribing a text with every lesson? On looking through Sunday school syllabuses one cannot avoid feeling that occasionally a text is prescribed simply to maintain the fixed uniformity of the syllabus. In these cases the time spent in dealing with the prescribed text might be more profitably utilised.

The question as to the particular value of learning psalms and similar spiritual verse is only part of a larger question, viz. the value for moral and religious purposes of poetry in general; and the Sunday school teacher should think of the smaller question from the point of view of the larger. A great poet at his worst may be irreligious; but a great poet at his best is essentially religious. And when we consider that some of the noblest spiritual poetry that has ever been written is to be found in the works of our own poets, past and present, the teacher might do well to draw upon this source as well as upon the Bible for poetical material. The extended field would give greater scope for choosing only the very best and the most suitable material for children.

In using good poetry from whatever source the teacher must claim neither too much nor too little for it. The prime aim of poetry is not to teach, explain, or enforce beliefs. The poet may indeed express his

faiths or his reasoned beliefs, but he expresses these for his own sake, and not for the sake of another. He expresses them in order that through this expression he may at the same time express the emotions of his mind or soul in contemplating the ideas. As his thoughts of the world, of nature, of man, of God crowd before him, he is moved—by his genius, his inspiration, we say—to express his thoughts and feelings in the language of noble emotion. His poetry is in reality the irrepressible activity of his spirit. David's songs, for example, were the irrepressible outpourings of a soul touched by the contemplation of things divine and human. His psalms are highly instructive, though their author's prime purpose was not to instruct. In similar fashion our own poet Robert Browning calls his "song" (or poetry) his "due to God."[1] And because good poetry is the irrepressible activity of the poet's soul, it is of value to a reader or hearer (for poetry is only poetry *as heard*) in so far as it recreates within the reader a similar activity of soul. He must certainly understand something of the ideas referred to, but it must be an emotional understanding in which emotion often plays a more important part than intellect. It is this poetic emotion that vitalises and idealises the facts and experiences of life; and the pupil who is trained to read and appreciate the language of a great poet as he contemplates a deed of bravery, of justice, of self-sacrifice, of faith, of calm resignation, is touched in a measure with the same kind of noble emotion. If the teacher therefore uses Biblical or other poetry as a means of religious education, he must lay greatest stress on the æsthetic and emotional value of the poetry. If there is little or none of this in the selected material, then the instruction will be

[1] See the closing lines of the prologue to *The Ring and the Book*.

much better conveyed through simple prose. The paradox is true, that the only justification for teaching children truth through poetry is when the prime aim of the poet is not to teach but to express emotion. This is one consideration which should guide Church authorities and teachers in their selection of poetry suitable for reading, memorising, or singing. There are other considerations. The chosen passages should be, both as regards idea and form, worth the pupil's study. Not every metrical psalm or part of a psalm is worth memorising. In many cases where mere versifiers have been at work, the simple and expressive prose version has been twisted and turned into cumbrous and spiritless verse. If such psalms must be read and memorised, then let them be in the prose version. It is true, as a rule, that verse is more easily memorised than prose, but this question of ease cannot be allowed to override the questions of form and intelligibility. If the teacher will carefully compare the prose and metrical versions of any particular psalm he will have some guidance as to whether he is justified or not in prescribing the metrical version for study. In a recent Golden Text-book issued by one of our Churches the metrical version of verses 5 to 7 of Psalm 107 is set as a memory lesson. Let us place the two versions side by side for contrast : it is instructive.

Prose Version	*Metrical Version*
Hungry and thirsty their soul fainted in them,	For thirst and hunger in them faints
Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distresses.	Their soul. When straits them press They cry unto the Lord and He Them frees from their distress.

And He led them forth by the right way that they might go to a city of habitation.	Them also in a way to walk That right is He did guide That they might to a city go Wherein they might abide.

Here the simple, direct, and natural form of the prose version is lost in the complex, roundabout, unnatural, and even ungrammatical form of the metrical version. To be of any value to the young learner the metrical version requires more explanation than it is worth.

Again, the passages chosen should be suited to the ideas and emotions of the young people. The suitability of material, however, is not to be decided by the learner's complete understanding of the ideas and his ability to explain them : children, like adults, can understand and feel the force of many things which they cannot explain in language. For example the 23rd Psalm (metrical version) contains several ideas and modes of expression that young children cannot fully grasp and explain ; yet they can comprehend in a dim way the ideas of God's goodness and protecting care which the Psalm conveys, and this because the idea of shepherd is both intelligible and interesting to them. It is the same with such psalms as the 100th and 121st and with such a paraphrase as the 2nd, "O God of Bethel," etc. Many of the psalms, however, are the expressions of reflections and feelings that belong only to adult life and experience ; others, again, are too vague and indefinite to secure the intelligent interest of children.

If the pupil's memorising of suitable passages is to be of religious value to them they will require careful and intelligent guidance in the exercise. It is not sufficient to prescribe a passage to be memorised at

home and then simply to "hear it" on the following Sunday. The ludicrous transformations which language undergoes in the memorising work of a child may afford amusing copy for magazine articles; but they often form at the same time a rather serious indictment against the teacher. The child who converted the line "Hast all our fathers led" into "Has stole our father's leg" was simply memorising a series of words which, as the teacher repeated them, sounded like the child's version.[1] Probably also the child saw more meaning in her own rendering than in the original. Intelligent memorising is a mental process involving several factors that go to make it successful, and young children require to be guided in this process and taught how to memorise. The Sunday school teacher may urge that he has no time to do this. If most of the Sunday school period is devoted to the reading lesson he certainly cannot do much. But if the memorising of worthy material is conducted in an intelligent and devotional manner this memory work may sometimes be more important than the reading lesson, and therefore should receive more time than the reading lesson. The time spent in teaching children to memorise the 23rd Psalm in an intelligent and devotional manner will do much more for their religious development than some reading lessons that appear in Sunday school syllabuses. Besides, as we shall see later on, the memorising need not be attempted at a single stretch.

Before proceeding to memorise, then, the pupils should have a general understanding of the content and the structure of the passage. The teacher's previous analysis of the passage will mark it out into a number

[1] For this example the writer is indebted to one of his lady colleagues, who was the child in question.

of mental pictures following each other in a set order. He will try to make this series explicit to the pupils. Very young children will remember the series simply as a series; older children should be led to recognise any logical connections between the various parts, and to memorise by the help of logical connection. Inverted language, so prevalent in verse, should be made clearer by reference to the normal prose order with which children are more familiar. In the case of a psalm the prose version may first be read. Too much attention, however, must not be paid to its phrasing, otherwise it will interfere with the memorising of the metrical version. Only where the prose version of a psalm is selected for memorising will the prose diction receive special attention.

The following analysis (left-hand column) is intended to indicate the kind of preparation necessary for an intelligent appreciation and memorising of the 23rd Psalm whether prose or metrical. It is evident that the blackboard can be of great assistance in emphasising the order of the ideas, in showing the relation between the two versions, and in underlining prominent and leading words.

Prose Version	*Metrical Version*
I	
The Lord is my *Shepherd* (therefore) I shall not want. (And so, as a good Shepherd does with his sheep)	The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want,
He maketh me to lie down in *green pastures;* He leadeth me beside the still waters.	He makes me down to lie In pastures green; He leadeth me The quiet waters by.

II

He *restoreth* my soul;
He *leadeth* me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

My soul He doth restore again,
And me to walk doth make
Within the paths of righteousness
Ev'n for His own name's sake.

III

Yea, though I walk through the *valley* of the *shadow of death*, I will fear no evil; (Why not?) for Thou art with me: Thy rod and staff they comfort me.

Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
Yet will I fear none ill;
For Thou art with me, and Thy rod
And staff me comfort still.

IV

Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life,
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Goodness and mercy all my life
Shall surely follow me;
And in God's house for evermore
My dwelling-place shall be.

The explanation of individual phrases must not be overdone. The central ideas of the psalmist that God (1) watches over His people like a good shepherd, (2) helps them to live and act in the right way, and (3) preserves and comforts them in the midst of evils, must be carefully emphasised. If the pupils grasp these ideas the teacher need not spend undue time over the exact meaning of such expressions as "He restoreth my soul." A very simple paraphrase such as "God helps me to think better thoughts and to do the right" will be enough to carry on the general meaning for the pupils. After all, a too minute dis-

cussion of a poet's meaning often robs the poetry of its meaning for the emotions. The sooner, therefore, the teacher can get his pupils to catch the general atmosphere and tone of the psalm, the better will it serve both the devotional and the memorising purpose of the lesson. To overdo explanation here is to kill the spirit of devotion, and so to rob the memorising process of the powerful aid of feeling.

The actual memorising of poetry is usually done in parts. Left to themselves, pupils would memorise the first stanza before going on to the next, and so on. So would most adults. Yet the experimental investigations of the laws of memory carried out by modern psychologists point to the conclusion that short tests, such as short poems, are best memorised by going over them repeatedly *as a whole* rather than by parts. That is, the "whole" or entire method is more economical than the "part" method which seems to be the one most favoured by teachers. This conclusion is supported by general psychological considerations. When the "part" method of memorising say several verses of a psalm or hymn is adopted, the repetition of the same verse over and over again sets up a mental association between the last word and the first word of the verse; whereas the association desired should be between the last word of one verse and the first of the following verse. The greater the number of parts into which the poem is split up for memorising purposes, the greater is the number of such disturbing associations which hinder the reproduction of the poem as a whole. The "whole" method, on the other hand, by setting up natural and logical associations between the various parts, enables the learner to catch the general sense, and this in turn expedites the memorising of the poem as a whole.

It has also been found that the speediest and most reliable method of memorising is to spread it over a period interrupted by longer or shorter intervals. Thus a whole psalm like the 23rd would be most speedily memorised and most surely remembered by repeating it a number of times on each of two or three successive Sundays. The teacher who, after explaining the psalm, tries this method of memorising it with his pupils will probably find that some of them will be word perfect in two Sundays. Many teachers, however, think it more satisfactory for the pupils to master one verse at a stretch: it is something definite and complete. But it is only a seeming advantage. The verse is only a part of the whole and is in itself incomplete; and, as has been shown, the "whole" method of memorising will take shorter time than the "part" method.

Whether the whole or part method of memorising is to be adopted, those who are responsible for drawing up Sunday school syllabuses should not encourage unintelligent memorising of psalms and paraphrases by a hard and fast division of them into "verses." Thus, in one published course of intermediate lessons for Sunday schools, the 30th Paraphrase is broken up into six verses of four lines each, and a verse prescribed for memorising for each successive Sunday. But verse 5 taken by itself is grammatically incomplete and only intelligible when read along with verse 6. It is very mechanical procedure to ask a pupil to memorise the lines :—

As dew upon the tender herb,
Diffusing fragrance round ;
As showers that usher in the Spring,
And cheer the thirsty ground :

and then to allow a whole week to elapse before asking him to complete the sense in the next verse beginning

So shall His presence bless our souls.

A wise teacher will here deviate from the syllabus to the extent of dealing with the two verses together and not on separate Sundays.

One more practical point calls for consideration. Is the repetition to be done silently by each pupil for himself, or simultaneously by the whole class? Where the circumstances allow, as they do in the separate classrooms of the day school, simultaneous repetition conducted in a quiet and devotional manner is the most effective. The objections that are rightly urged against the indiscriminate use of simultaneous reading in school do not hold here. The simultaneous repetition of the psalm is comparable to its simultaneous singing, and the exercise gains in devotional value through the sympathy and unity of numbers.

The procedure we have been advocating may be set forth shortly thus :—

1st Sunday.	Analysis and explanation of psalm. Time required say ten minutes.
	Repetitions of psalm—say five minutes. (At a moderate rate one repetition takes one minute.)
2nd Sunday.	Simultaneous repetition and individual recitation—say ten minutes.
3rd Sunday.	(If found necessary) Final repetition and individual recitation—say two or three minutes.

Older pupils who have had some such training as above in intelligent memorising might be trusted to do the memorising part of the lesson by themselves, and at home. That is, on one Sunday the teacher would discuss with them the meaning and value of the psalm, and on the following they would be prepared to reproduce it from memory.

CHAPTER XI

PRAISE AND PRAYER IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

If the reading and recitation of spiritual verse should be intelligent and devotional, so too should the singing of it. Singing is the expression of the emotion produced by some mental picture ; hence the elements or ideas that constitute this picture must be understood in order that the right emotion may be forthcoming. In the case of Sunday school singing a preliminary explanation of a new hymn is often very necessary, but is as often neglected, the children being allowed to pick up the sense in the process of singing. Even when the hymn expresses the ideas of some lesson already known to the children, an impressive reading is likely to ensure a more intelligent and devotional singing. This reading should be done by the superintendent and occasionally by some good reader amongst the pupils. After all, the effect on children of expressive reading is often as great as that of expressive singing. In any case the two exercises support each other and the result is more devotional praise. If it be objected that time will not permit of both reading and singing, then time should be found on some particular Sunday by cutting down the time given to some other exercise or omitting that exercise altogether. This of course implies that the superintendent is at liberty, and deems it a wise course, to modify the ordinary routine of his Sunday school service. If praise whether in the Church or in the Sunday school is to be fruitful of religious develop-

ment, as much attention must be paid to the sense as to the "sweet melody of praise."

But whilst the devotional singing of children's hymns is dependent on a general understanding of the meaning, this in turn is dependent on the proper choice of hymns. Of late years much has been done to provide children with hymns whose ideas and sentiments are appropriate to the child and which he can sing with some degree of sincerity. It is to be feared, however, that in many quarters children are still singing hymns whose ideas are quite alien and even repugnant to a healthy type of religion. Such hymns as dwell impressively on the awfulness of death and of judgment to come and of the terrors of hell are either meaningless to children, or if they have any meaning it is one that is apt to produce a morbid and unchild-like attitude towards things religious. Fear, like wonder, is certainly one of those primary emotions which are closely connected with the child's religious development; but the psychological study of religion as well as the experience of thoughtful teachers goes to show that fear is much less effective than love and trust in stimulating the religious life of the child.[1] Even amongst hymns that are specially classified "for the young" there are too many that dwell on the ideas of pilgrimage, sin, and death. Why, for example, should a child to whom the world is beautiful and intensely interesting be made to sing that "Earth is but a desert drear"? Rather ought he to be trained to see and hear the glory of God in all things around him. The writer of the children's hymn beginning—

> The world looks very beautiful
> And full of joy to me,

[1] See Dr. Rusk's *The Religious Education of the Child*, p. 36.

strikes a truer note for children. Why, again, should it be suggested to a child that he is but a stranger on this desert earth, and that heaven—in his mind, some very remote place—is his home, where he will rest for evermore? This is not how to teach him the supreme value of his life of action on earth. And to the normal healthy child as to the normal healthy adult, the idea of everlasting rest has no attraction. Rather let us choose hymns that emphasise the ideas of service, of activity—activity in overcoming difficulties and in rendering service to God and man *here* and *now*. The hymn beginning "O what can little hands do" strikes a truer and more inspiring note. Again, why should any children's hymn anticipate the speedy approach of the evils of life? Can anything be more unnatural and insincere than the sentiments that are put into the mouths of children in the lines :—

> Soon our school days will be over,
> Cares and sorrows lie before us,
> Hidden dangers, snares unknown.

The best way to prepare children to meet evil and sin when it appears is not to suggest and conjure up visions of evil, but to establish the ideas and practice of what is good, so that when evil does obtrude itself it will find less chance of entrance into the child's life. Our objection to the tone of some children's hymns specially applies to many of those illiterate and morbid temperance hymns sometimes sung at young people's temperance meetings. The so-called temperance training given through hymns with such wearisome refrains as "Have nothing to do with the Drink" is bound to have a narrowing and even a reactionary influence. Some specimens of the best English lyrical verse have already been admitted into our Church Hymnals; but the experiment of searching the poets

for hymns worthy of being read and sung might be carried out on a wider scale and with profit to the cause of an elevating and healthy religious life.

As a further means of stimulating and sustaining devotional feeling amongst the young, something more might be done through the instrumental music of the Church. Comparatively large sums are spent on the organ music of our Churches, and how little sometimes is made of that music. The maximum amount of time during which even an adult may hear that music cannot well be more than an hour each Sunday; the child hears much less. Why then should there not be an occasional organ recital interspersed with vocal pieces, specially suited for the young of our Sunday schools? This recital might profitably be given on a Sunday in place of the regular Sunday school work. To secure the full value of such a recital, the minister, whom we regard as the head of his own Sunday school, might give a brief and simple explanation of what the composer in each case is aiming to express through his music. In this way there would be a chance of securing something like *intelligent and devotional listening* on the part of the pupils. The whole atmosphere of such a recital conducted in a reverent and devotional manner is of subtle and inestimable value in the development of the religious attitude of mind, and a religious attitude has much to do in determining religious life. Such special provision for the young of our Churches has this further advantage, that it gradually gives them the feeling that God's house and God's music are for them as much as for their elders, and that reverential listening to and appreciation of God-inspired music are not the least important ways in which they can both glorify God and hear Him glorified. To those who would object

that young children do not understand such music, the answer is, How many adults *understand* it ? It is not a question of understanding so much as of feeling, and children are more capable of feeling the power of good music than they are often credited with.[1]

In a book dealing with the religious education of the young the question of children's prayers calls for careful consideration. Throughout the preceding chapters we have laid considerable stress on the importance of teaching children right religious ideas and of getting them to apply or express these ideas in action. But application of the ideas only comes through the desire or aspiration to see the ideas realised in practice, and the aspiration that expresses itself in prayer to God is the most effective kind of aspiration. But apart from this effect of aspiration on realisation, prayer, more than any other form of worship, lifts the worshipper for the time being into the atmosphere of the Divine ; and the habitual breathing of such an atmosphere cannot but have a considerable influence on the whole tone of the worshipper's life. Now children are by nature easily brought under the influence of this atmosphere. The natural attitude of the young child towards everything that is higher and greater than himself is one of wonder and reverence ; and the first and surest step in his religious development is taken when he prays at his mother's knee to the Unseen God who has made all the marvellous things around him. And as to the far-reaching influence of such a step, how often does it happen in the case of grown men and women, that it is not so much any definite religious instruction as the sweet and hallowed

[1] Were our Churches to attempt in some such way as we have suggested to train their young people to worship through listening, Church organists might have less cause to lament the beggarly attendance at their organ recitals !

atmosphere of prayers prayed at a mother's knee that lingers around their lives with potent and inspiring spell. The pity is that so frequently prayer soon ceases to be a part of the growing child's religious life, and with the disappearance of prayer his childish reverence which was meant to develop into a higher kind of reverence gives place to indifference and even disrespect towards religious things. For this both the home and the Church are to blame, the latter perhaps as much as the former.

In Religion as in other spheres of thought, criticism, as one writer says, is to-day the ruling power, and we are apt to test the worth of Religion by the quality of the grist which it brings to the argumentative mill. Hence " prayer sinks to the position of an incident in public worship, the sermon becomes the centre of attraction and the essential thing. Hence the forms of religion most honoured in a critical age are apt to be not those which touch the human heart most deeply, but those which give argument the widest scope, discussion the most numerous topics, and rhetoric the most tempting themes. We may often watch our minds or the minds of our neighbours picking their way, like wary travellers, among the green pastures where these opportunities abound."[1] This last sentence deserves italics : it is a quiet and subtle indictment of the pew as much as of the pulpit.

If young children need to be taught what and how to pray, the instruction and training need to be continued beyond the infant stages. It is the duty of the Church through its Sunday schools to continue that instruction and training. Only by intelligent and repeated personal activity in praying can children be

[1] Principal L. P. Jacks's *From the Human End*, chap. ix.—*The Tyranny of Mere Things*, pp. 93, 94.

habituated to the exercise. Now the Lord's Prayer is perhaps the only prayer in which children in our schools take an active personal share. Like their elders they may listen to other prayers; and in so far as prayers are really united prayers nothing need be said against the practice of praying by proxy. But praying by proxy is not always united prayer even in the case of adults, much less so in the case of children. The repetition of the prayers by each individual worshipper especially when accompanied by a reverential bodily posture has an undoubted value in the development of a sincere and reverential spirit of worship. Whatever may be urged against stereotyped forms of prayer, there is no doubt that the personal and active share which each worshipper is enabled to take in those prayers makes the prayers in a way his own prayers; and unless a prayer, like any other exercise, is made one's own prayer, there is little if any religious value in it. The question then arises, can our Churches do anything to enable children to take a more active and thereby a more living interest in an exercise that is so potent in the development of the reverential spirit. It seems to the writer that something might be done both as regards the *content* of children's prayers and the *manner* in which they are to be offered. As to the content, it is quite true, as many good Christians would urge, that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." But the saying is only true *if there is abundance of the heart*, that is, if the heart knows what it should desire from God, and what it should thank and praise Him for. Doubtless this knowledge will be gradually acquired through the ordinary course of religious instruction; but for the purpose of children's prayers at least this knowledge needs to be specifically brought before them and expressed in set

prayers. Set forms of prayers which are repeated from time to time need not be of less religious value than extempore prayers, if they are recited with sincerity. No prayer from the pulpit that has been carefully thought out beforehand is extempore, but it does not thereby suffer in effectiveness. If we are to object to the recitation of set prayers, we should logically reject the Lord's Prayer. And if we reject set prayers, why not set hymns ? If the content of a prayer is expressive of the things we ought to pray for, the fixed form of the prayer is rather an advantage than otherwise. In drawing up prayers suitable for the united recitation of children there seems to be a valuable field of work for the best minds in the Churches. A book of appropriate children's prayers should come to have the same right to a place in the religious education of the child as a book of hymns. One writer suggests that children should be encouraged to use their own words in prayer. This seems to be a counsel of perfection. Besides, all prayers, including children's prayers, should be couched in language which, while it may be simple, is yet dignified. Left to themselves children will not use such language. Yet they appreciate dignified language so long as its general meaning and truth is understood ; and such dignified language is the most appropriate expression of reverential feeling. The prayers should also be short and pointed, avoiding the vague generalities that are frequently too prominent in public prayers and that fail to "grip" the mind and heart of the young. A book of children's prayers might well include prayers in verse. Some of the most pointed and fervent prayers suitable for children are to be found in the works of our own English poets, and the united recitation of such prayers is rendered more effective by the verse form. The following beautiful lines entitled

"The Prayer Perfect" by James Whitcomb Riley exemplifies the simple and pointed kind of prayer which we are advocating :—

Dear Lord ! kind Lord !
Gracious Lord ! I pray
Thou wilt look on all I love
Tenderly to-day.
Weed their hearts of weariness,
Scatter every care
Down a wake of angel-wings
Winnowing the air.

Bring unto the sorrowing
All release from pain ;
Let the lips of laughter
Overflow again ;
And with all the needy
O divide, I pray,
This vast treasure of content
That is mine to-day.

The old custom of family worship is fast becoming a thing of the past ; the Church laments this. It is just possible that the custom might be revived to some small extent were the Churches to prepare for such a revival by training and habituating their children to the use of set prayers.

The question as to what is the appropriate bodily posture in prayer is important. It is a well-known educational truth that the bodily attitude which accompanies any mental exercise affects the exercise itself, rendering it more effective or the reverse. Every teacher knows that the pupil who is lolling on his desk is not in the best bodily attitude for receiving instruction ; and the common injunction to "sit up" is one justifiable means whereby the teacher helps the pupil to readjust his mind to the mental work in hand. In the worshipful exercise of prayer, therefore, it seems imperative that children should adopt that bodily attitude which is best fitted to accompany and

to help and maintain the spiritual attitude in prayer. There are three possible postures: standing, the once common posture in Presbyterian Churches; sitting, the present custom in many Churches; and kneeling. Of the first two postures it is doubtful whether the old custom of standing at prayer was not essentially more reverential than the present one of sitting, which tends to become something like the schoolboy's lolling. The practice of standing in saying the Lord's Prayer in day schools seems to show an instinctive feeling on the part of teachers that the standing posture is more appropriate than the sitting one. But of the three postures the kneeling one is certainly the most reverential. Every individual worshipper the world over naturally kneels when he offers prayer to Him whom they recognise not only as their All-Father but their God. Further, the kneeling posture helps to induce a humble and reverential frame of mind, and the periodical repetition of the right prayerful bodily attitude creates in time a more habitual consciousness of the Divine and a more reverential spiritual attitude on the part of the individual towards aught that is spiritually higher and better than himself. The tendency of modern democracy is to reduce everything in earth and heaven to a common level and value; and nothing, whether in prayer or in any other worshipful exercise, that can neutralise the effects of such a tendency is too small to engage the watchful attention of the religious educator. Of the mottoes that might be chosen to express the spirit in which all the exercises of the Sunday school should be conducted, perhaps none is fitter than our own poet Tennyson's lines:—

> Let knowledge grow from more to more,
> But more of reverence in us dwell.[1]

[1] From the introductory stanzas to "In Memoriam."

More systematic and devoted attention to children's prayers on the part of the Church and the home might issue, in some measure, in the far-reaching result suggested by Miss F. M. Caillard in her book *The Church and the New Knowledge*. Her view, briefly expressed, is as follows: "Prayer in its widest sense is communion with the unseen Spiritual Reality. This implies such a consciousness of our Divine Environment as changes our mental attitude towards the whole of our experience, co-ordinating, unifying, and illuminating it with a new and transcendent power. The individual possessed of such a consciousness may be said to live the life of prayer, in which his 'practice of the presence of God' has become so habitual that inevitably he lives consciously in direct and immediate touch with the Father of his spirit, and lifts his heart and mind to Him in every daily emergency, temptation, disappointment, and in every daily occasion of joy and thanksgiving!"[1] Christ's life was such a life of prayer: His consciousness of the continuous presence of the Father was the central and guiding and sustaining determinant of all his life activities. Such an ever-present consciousness of the Divine in our life would not give *specific* guidance in every action—for this we must have specific knowledge of religious and moral truths; but it would serve as *an ever present incentive to seek after righteous decisions* in conduct. Such an habitual consciousness is truly an ideal spiritual habit, only to be acquired, even in small measure, through personal training and exercise. The habit must be begun early; and the necessary training might, in Miss Caillard's words, "even provide a significant and fundamental basis for Sunday school teaching."

[1] Op. cit., chap. xi.—"The Life of Prayer."

CHAPTER XII

CHILDREN IN CHURCH: THE CHURCH SERVICE AS A MEANS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

It is true, as one writer[1] has said, that "in the teaching and example of Jesus public religion is almost nothing, private religion is almost everything." But there is a reason for this. Without personal and individual religion public religion is a sham, and it was an important part of Christ's mission to emphasise this. He despised the Pharisee, not because he prayed in public, but because his prayer was a self-righteous, self-centred, unsocial prayer. How gladly would He have seen both Pharisee and Publican united together in the temple in a common aspiration. And when He taught His disciples to appeal to "Our Father" who is in heaven, He enshrined in words immortal the ideal of a brotherhood of man in which men would not only work but would also worship in unity. To-day men and women are finding that, compared with their self-centred individual efforts, their co-operative and social work is expressive of vaster aspirations and wider and less selfish views, and is altogether of a more uplifting character. And the same result is bound to follow from a true social worship. That church attendance and public worship have often sadly failed to further a personal and individual religion is no proof of the inutility of public worship. Formal united worship can only aid and sustain a personal religion that is

[1] "J.B." of *The Christian World*. See *Selections from Brierley*, p. 233.

already present in some measure. The individual worshipper who contributes, in however small a degree, of his spiritual nature to the Church worship receives much more than he gives. A sincere public worship, therefore, should be a most important means of sustaining and stimulating the personal religion of the individual. It is not, as so often fallaciously stated, less church-going and more personal religion that is wanted to-day, but rather more church-going and more personal religion. Through a combination of the two the old idle piety of the Church should give place—it is already giving place—to that active piety which manifests itself in social service.

To secure the conditions for an effective public worship the Church must begin with the children. As has been urged in Chapter I, the child is the foundation of the congregation, and as such he must grow up in organic spiritual unity with his elders. Whilst the Sunday school work should be permeated as far as possible with the atmosphere and spirit of worship, the church itself is the place where that atmosphere and spirit is or should be most present. The child therefore must be gradually accustomed to regard the church as the fittest place where he can unite with his fellows in worship, and find in united sympathetic worship a stimulus to his own inner life of aspiration. How best to make the Church service contribute to the religious education of children may be considered under the two heads: the service that is primarily intended for adults, and the children's service proper.

If the child is to attend the adults' service it is necessary that this service should have some meaning and interest for him *as a child*. Now it may be at once admitted that it is impossible to make every part of that service conform to this condition. Take

first the address or sermon. It will frequently involve reference to ideas and practices above the plane of the child's thought and experience. Certain possible solutions of the difficulty may be suggested. Many a modern sermon might quite well be simpler and shorter without loss to the adult hearers. The wider dissemination of good literature amongst the masses both through books and the daily press, renders it less necessary now for the pulpit to enter into learned discussions of religious, political, economic, and other questions. As the writer from whom we have already quoted says, "As long as religion is vital in the preacher he cannot help seeing that it is of infinitely more political, social, and economic value than any politics or socialisms or economics,"[1] and that "what the world really wants is men who have news from the land of the ideal, who have God's life within them, who open afresh the springs of living water that quench the thirst of the soul. When the Church is alive it makes religion the most interesting thing in the land, whatever else is happening."[2] Professor Denney, writing on the subject of the Cross, thinks that in the last generation the Church has been a little shy in its attitude to the central truth of the Cross. "Preachers," he says, "have chosen texts not quite out of proportion to their abilities rather than those texts which first strike us dumb. They have hovered over the pages of their Bibles instead of being drawn down into their deep places. There is reason to hope that the war will bring us back to the simple fact of the Cross—Christ died for us."[3] It is not improbable that, when the preacher descends more fearlessly and

[1] *Selections from Brierley*, p. 251.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 250.
[3] *War and the Fear of God*, by the Rev. Principal James Denney, D.D., p. 78.

artlessly into those "deep places" without the encumbrance of ratiocinative dogma, he will have a better chance of getting even the children of his flock to accompany him. For truly some of those great things of the spirit which at first "strike us dumb" are hid from the world's wise and prudent and revealed unto babes and sucklings. The fact of sacrifice and its redemptive and inspiring effects on those for whom it is made is not unintelligible to a child who can understand a simple tale of self-sacrifice. He seeks for no so-called ultimate explanation of the how and the why, and the preaching that proclaims the sacrifice of the Cross as to a little child will not fail to have the right effect on the adult. In church it is the simple religious note calculated to thrill and inspire that most of us in our inmost hearts wish to hear, and not the learned echoes of theological controversies: it is the note that rouses us to live instead of to talk religion: and it is the kind of note that is not unintelligible to our children.

One way of helping children to understand something of the sermon is to present the central idea in the form of an illustrative story. Thus a discourse on the text "Love your enemies" might be preceded by such a story as "The man who hated the Germans," quoted in Chapter VI. It would appeal to most children and at the same time convey the essential meaning of Christ's words. The sermon would then discuss the precept in a more fundamental way for adults, and even the older children would, in light of the introductory story, be able to follow the sermon in a measure. Frequently a sermon gains in effectiveness by such a beginning. Some of Jesus's best sermons both began and ended with a story.

As a rule, whenever an address is directed specially

to the children of a congregation, it should have some bearing on the subsequent discourse addressed to adults. The children should be told of the connection, for there is always the chance that the interest and intelligence roused in the preliminary address will be carried over to some extent into the fuller discourse. The children's simple address thus becomes, in the language employed in Chapter IV, a kind of preparation step to the possible assimilation of the more difficult exposition of the sermon.

From what has just been said, it should be evident that the children's address should always precede and not follow the sermon. It is in accordance with all our knowledge of mental processes to present the easier before the more difficult and as a possible means of rendering the more difficult intelligible.

There need not be so much anxiety about the singing of hymns and psalms or responses. The music itself is interesting, and in the circumstances productive of a certain amount of religious feeling, even whilst the words and ideas may not be very intelligible to young minds. The writer is in complete sympathy with Professor Peake when he states in his book *Reform in Sunday School Teaching* that "it is a mistake to think that children should be taught children's hymns and no others."[1] He rightly contends that in the great classical hymns not primarily written for children there is much that will gradually come to have a real meaning to children. Great literature, so long as it is not absolutely unintelligible to the child, has a power over his mind and heart, and this power increases with increasing years and insight. In the singing of such great hymns as "Rock of Ages" or "Jesus, Lover of my Soul" the child can quite well

[1] *Reform in Sunday School Teaching*, p. 88.

take his part with benefit to his religious development. Once eliminate from our Church services those so-called hymns that are "mere religious twaddle done into rhyme and cut up into metrical lengths"[1] and we need not trouble much as to what hymns the child sings in the Church service. The Sunday school is the place where we can bestow more attention to their own special hymns.

As for Church prayers, something might be done to make these simpler and more suitable alike for child and adult. We may agree with A. C. Benson that "the saying of formal liturgies in an ornate building seems to be a practice which has drifted very far away from the simplicity of individual religion which Christ appears to have aimed at," and that prayer "should rather be a constant uplifting of the heart, a stretching out of the hands to God."[2] But this constant uplifting of the heart is not a first but a last stage reached in religious development; and surely the "certain seasons, certain postures, and definite language" of prayer to which Benson and others object are all, when rightly used, aids towards the development and maintenance of that constant uplifting of the heart to God. The forms and modes of public prayer need not be empty of meaning and value: it is to be feared that, in the case of most of us, when once the set seasons and forms of prayer are neglected, prayer itself ceases to exist or to exist with any vitalising force. But indeed children love form and ceremony, and find in it a value which satisfies their need of outward active expression. Whether the form and ceremonial of a formal liturgy is to be a sincere expression of their spiritual nature will depend on the content of the liturgy and on the mode of their train-

[1] Op. cit., p. 87. [2] *The Thread of Gold*, 4th ed., p. 141.

ing. To most children the public prayers of their Church are sufficiently meaningful to produce the right religious atmosphere of thought and feeling, and this effect is of great consequence to the child. As he bends his knee side by side with parents and friends in the "house of quiet," even whilst he may understand little of the actual words uttered, he is impressed in his own childish way with the feeling of that unseen Presence to whom ascends the prayer of an assembled people.

We have now to consider the special Church services for children. These may be made a valuable supplement to the work of the Sunday school. Held say once a month, in addition to or perhaps better in place of the Sunday school meeting, they should give the minister the opportunity of making the religious appeal to his children in circumstances best fitted for worship. Here the idea of "learning lessons," which is inevitably associated in the child's mind with Sunday school attendance, gives place to the idea of worship pure and simple—and this is a most desirable aim.

Untrammelled by the requirements of the adult congregation this service can be more closely related to the instruction given in the Sunday school, and in this way should be more meaningful and interesting to the youngest children.

The address should as a rule emphasise some lesson or lessons previously learned in the school, or should bear upon some topic of current interest with which the children are more or less familiar and which is fraught with some lesson of spiritual significance. In this way the children start from a nucleus of interest in the subject which the minister can expand and make more contributory to the children's spiritual culture. In accordance with the known interests and mentality

of children, the address should be simple and full of action and incident. In the *Children's Story Sermons* of the American pastor Hugh T. Kerr are to be found good examples of the kind of sermon that appeals to children. In these story sermons questions are frequently interpolated, but we presume they are only rhetorical and not meant to be answered by the hearers. It is a doubtful proceeding to introduce the school method of question and answer into the Church service : as we have already said, the idea of teaching and learning should be entirely absent from children's minds in their worshipful service in church.

Children delight in expressing their emotions through songs they know, hence their special service should give them full opportunity of singing those hymns which they have already studied in the Sunday school. These when now sung in the church and where possible with instrumental accompaniment will be expressive of a new and fresh devotional feeling. Where there is an organ, part of the children's service might consist in listening to a short simple piece of music having some bearing on the rest of the service. As has been urged in Chapter XI, intelligent and devotional listening to good music is not the least effective way by which children can grow in religious thought and feeling. Under the direction of a wise and sympathetic minister a church organist will esteem it a privilege to feel he is contributing in a direct and special way to the spiritual interests of the children of a church.

Whilst music should form an important part in the children's service, a caution is needed against the not uncommon practice of " getting up " what Professor Peake styles " jingling trash and gaudy novelties "[1] for anniversary and similar services. In the sphere of

[1] *Reform in Sunday School Teaching*, p. 87.

religious education anything that savours of a show performance is a travesty of religion. Where song is to form the chief part of a children's service, the hymns should be chosen for their religious value first and foremost, and without regard to their possible showy effect. The clergyman who is alive to the vital interests of the children of his congregation, and who has the courage—much needed sometimes—to shun vain show and spectacular effect, will see to it that what the children get up for these special occasions shall be the best possible for their own spiritual culture. If, further, he himself takes a personal and controlling interest in the preparation, he can help greatly to make the preparation a real means of religious training. Otherwise the aim of these Special Services is apt to degenerate into an ignoble one—the glory of God is lost sight of in the glory of self.

No children's service would be complete without some kind of united prayer. This prayer may have been previously learned in the Sunday school. Age need not wither nor custom stale the simplicity and beauty and comprehensiveness of the Lord's Prayer, which should certainly form a part of the children's service. If another prayer is added it might be such a prayer in verse form as was quoted in Chapter XI. It is a type of prayer that the children would repeat together with new interest and religious feeling in the hallowed surroundings of their church. If the children know no such prayer by heart the clergyman might read or recite an appropriate prayer. Were there a suitable prayer book for children it might be used for this purpose. [The question of set formal prayers was discussed in Chapter XI.]

Again, many a hymn is both in content and language a prayer, and children should know that they are to

sing it as such. The point we are trying to emphasise about children's prayers is the necessity for introducing simplicity in the thought, and variety in the ways by which we can really and truly pray. There is nothing to be urged against the liturgy of a church because of its fixed form so long as that liturgy is expressive of the religious thought and feeling of the worshipper, but he is a wise pastor who in dealing with children leads them to the recognition and practice of such other modes of prayer as suggested above. Let us teach our children that they can pray in their reading, pray in their singing, pray indeed in all their activities.

Throughout this book we have touched only incidentally on the problem of discipline in its external forms of order and good behaviour. One point, however, seems to the writer to call for special consideration here, and that is the manner of children's assembling and dismissing both in Sunday school and in their own special church service. The orderly and methodical assembling and dismissing of the day elementary schools is not a merely formal and meaningless piece of daily routine. It is disciplinary of outward behaviour, which in turn and in time helps to develop a right internal disposition towards good law and order. It further helps to put the pupils into that ordered and self-controlled frame of mind which is an essential preliminary to serious and purposeful learning. It constitutes a valuable sedative to young bodies and minds often unduly excited by the riotous ebullitions of youthful spirits. Now if this sedative is needed in the day school it is needed no less—sometimes more so—in the Sunday school. It is to be feared that in many cases disorderly behaviour before Sunday school or church overflows into the school and church

themselves. Looked at in the proper light the orderly assembling and entrance into church should be regarded as part of the service. It is at least a fitting preparation for the service.

As in a good day school, this assembling should take place under the guidance of the teachers. In this way the teacher has an excellent opportunity of meeting his pupils individually before service, and striking that personal note of friendly interest and enquiry to which children so readily respond. Entrance to church should be class by class according to some pre-arranged order. So too should be the dismissal, each class teacher being responsible for leading out his class, beginning with the classes farthest forward in the church.

Some Sunday school teachers may think that we have made too much of the necessity of methodical entering and leaving the church. But it is just because we have to deal with children, and not with adults, that we must recognise that children need to be gradually habituated to practise the external forms of law and order as a means of acquiring respect for law and order and seemly behaviour. The mental attitude which their day school discipline produces and which leads them to respect the day school law and order is strongly formative of character, and that same attitude should be equally present wherever their religious training is concerned. When children have reached that stage of self-control when external devices are no longer needed for their governance, these devices are naturally dropped. Until that stage is reached the teacher should neglect no expedient, however seemingly mechanical and formal, that he thinks likely to contribute to the spiritual end in view.

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